THE SPANISH PRISONER

BY

FREEMAN TILDEN

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Books by Freeman Tilden

KHAKI
MR. PODD
SECOND WIND
THAT NIGHT
THE SPANISH PRISONER
THE VIRTUOUS HUSBAND
WILD MONEY

The Spanish Prisoner

BY FREEMAN TILDEN

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THE SPANISH PRISONER

PROLOGUE

FROM the Plaza de Cataluña to the Plaza de la Paz, in Barcelona, is not more than a mile in distance, but the broad street that connects the two plazas changes its name no less than four times on the way. In general, it is called the Ramblas; and on this throbbing thoroughfare, on a pleasant day, all Barcelona is to be seen.

The Paseo de Gracia is ornate and luxurious: the Calle de las Cortes is wide and impressive: but the Ramblas are —Barcelona!

They say that Barcelona is not Spain, and this is true. The language spoken is not Castilian, but Catalan. The people are quick, eager, and thriving, and they never put off till the morrow what can be done to-day. The streets are swept and watered every night; the hotels are clean and modern; and the tourist who ventures forth to see the fandango danced in the streets by impetuous damsels, to the tune of a languorous guitar, is doomed to disappointment. Instead of the picturesque *mantilla*, the women wear Parisian bonnets of the latest mode; and the men, when they doff their hats, reveal in the linings the name and trademark of a London maker.

But, if Barcelona is not Spain, neither is it any other country or any other place. It is wholly itself—dashing,

colourful, boisterous, and original. Few are the days in the year when the sun does not smile upon the city. The unpaintable blue of the Mediterranean washes its sandy shore. Mount Tibidabo smiles down upon the city from the north, and on the west the harbour is flanked by gray, mysterious Montjuich. Flags of twenty nations flutter at the stern of ships in the port, and the sailors from these ships, British, German, Italian, Malay, Turk, and Greek, swagger up the Ramblas in search of action, which is never lacking. There is a hectic mingling of dress, of uniforms, of hats, manners, and tongues. And Life, moving swiftly along the Ramblas, keeping in the shade of the plane trees when possible, gleams, gesticulates, and—goes.

It was down the Ramblas that Señor Arturo Cervello went, one April day, borne along by the tide of humans who moved with him, and staring at them curiously as he went. He was rather a distinguished looking young man, not yet touched twenty-three, and his black clothes had that too well brushed appearance that proclaims their owner a man of dwindling fortune. His shoes, well blacked, needed new heels and soles. His hat drooped slightly at the brim, and no amount of attention could disguise its age. But his linen was fresh and clean, and his hands, slim and white, were those of a gentleman born. There was quiet, unobtrusive pride in his fine dark eyes. His nose was sensitive and aquiline, and his lips, though full and sensuous, were curbed by a certain Spartan self-discipline of the jaw. Altogether, Don Arturo was a handsome figure; and some of the shop girls, rambling during their lunch hour, cast eyes at him with shy boldness. Don Arturo saw and relished the glances, smiled amiably, but did not look back at them when he had passed.

Since he was walking down the Ramblas in search of something as yet unknown, Señor Cervello took his time about it. He strayed out of the current, now and again, to gaze upon some mezzotints and etchings in an art store window. He noted, not without a moistening of the lips, a fine display of freshly roasted chickens, joints of beef, and loins of crisply browned pork i nadelicatessen. When he reached the Rambla de Santa Monica, where the shipping offices are, he leisurely admired a miniature Lloyd Sabaudo passenger ship which invited his eye. He had plenty of time before his luncheon, because, being somewhat embarrassed financially, he had lately fallen into the habit of eating only twice a day. Even this economy seemed likely to undergo further restriction, unless his luck should turn.

At the entrance to the Plaza de la Paz, the young man stopped, undecided, and gazed up at the great bronze statue of Columbus, at the top of its high column of granite. The great Christopher was pointing with a finger toward the West—the marvellous West that he had discovered for Spain. There was something rather pensive in the attitude of the Great Voyager, as though he were wondering whether, after all, it had been worth while. But Don Arturo was not thinking thus. He was wondering how it would be if he should try his fortune in that direction. Several of his old school chums were in South and Central America and were becoming wealthy. But to leave Spain! And to cross a damnable wet gulf, full of mischief and grief—as he well knew, having been dreadfully seasick once between Valencia and Majorca. No, it was not possible! Better to be threadbare in Spain than miserable in the Americas!

But Señor Cervello's stomach cried aloud for nourish-

ment. It was only one o'clock, two whole hours before the time he had set for lunching, and even now he was feeling faint. He would go and get a cup of coffee and a roll. So he turned his back upon the Paseo de Colón, with its dusty, frustrated palms, and its bleak buildings which housed the customs and the port authority, and went back a few steps up the Rambla to a little side street, where there was a cheap coffee shop that served good bread. Here, he took one of the little tables that encroached on the narrow pavement and rapped upon the flagstones with his stick. At the next table sat a corpulent man with swinish eyes, very swarthy, with heavy jowls. The fat man was stuffing a whole pastry into his mouth, and, hardly stopping to taste in, washed it down with an enormous draft of coffee.

In spite of the look of distaste that came upon Don Arturo's face as their eyes met, the big man nodded familiarly and saluted: "*Buenos dias*, señor!"

"*Buenos dias*, señor," replied the young man politely. His coffee and roll came, and while he ate the bread, the big man was watching him. Before he had finished, his companion rose and came to Cervello's table. Apologizing, in a rude fashion, he plumped directly into the matter that occupied his mind.

"You would be from Madrid, perhaps?" he asked of the young man.

"No, señor; I am Catalan, like yourself."

The piggish eyes seemed perplexed. "But the way you speak, I should have said——"

"I am from Orihuela," explained Don Arturo. "We Catalans of that district speak pure Castilian, as you probably know."

"Ah, I seem to have heard that. Yes, yes. But I do not see why it should be."

"I do not exactly know," said the young man, "but I know that when Jaime the Conqueror drove back the Arabs, and Catalan became the speech of the inhabitants of these parts, my people alone clung to their former tongue."

"Well, well," exclaimed the fat man, who was not at all interested, "that may be the fact, but it bakes no bread. I say, let a man know his business, and forget old wives' stories. The point is, señor, do you happen to know also the English language?"

"I studied it in school," replied Cervello. "I can read it and write it a little. But as to speaking properly, I do not know."

"Yet, with a little instruction from an English gentleman, you could perhaps manage well enough?"

"I suppose so. But why, señor, do you ask this?"

"Because I see that you are a gentleman, and also hard up."

A flush of anger rose in Don Arturo's cheeks, and his thin hand trembled—the hand that held his cup—so that the coffee was spilled on the table. But he held himself in check, in spite of the insolence, remembering that the lower-class Catalan speech is blunt and to the point and rather scorns conventional delicacy.

"I meant no harm," went on the big man, seeing the wave of passion in the other's face. "It is no disgrace to be hard up. I have been that way myself. I merely thought I might be able to put you in the way of something good, if you could speak English."

Don Arturo was mollified and admitted that he was looking for a position of some sort, and needed one. "The truth is, señor," he explained with a proud honesty, "I have never learned a trade or profession, because, being an

only child of wealthy parents, it was not thought necessary for me; but the family has lost its money, and I am thrown on my own. I would gladly do anything honourable, within my capacity."

"Honourable!" sneered the fat man. "I don't know what you mean. Any money is honourable, after you get it. Of course, if you try to cheat, and fail, you deserve what you get. You are then a crook. But if you succeed, who is the pot to call the kettle black?"

"I cannot discuss that with you, señor," replied Cervello, in disgust. It was as he thought—this man was a gross blackguard, the sort that makes a well-bred man feel unclean, after contact!

"Don't go so fast," said the other. "I can't argue with you; I am not an educated man; but I know a thing or two. Now, I have a little business which is, you might say, all profit and no work. It takes two to operate this business, and one of them ought to be well born and a good talker. Look at me! You can see that no bells were rung when I was born, but I've done pretty well. The only reason I need a partner is because the young man who worked with me made a fool of himself, began to paint pictures, and went off to Paris. Paint pictures! Imagine that—when he might have made enough money with me to hire a dozen painters to paint for him!—Now, young señor, do you mind my giving you a bit of advice?"

"I should be grateful for it," answered Cervello humbly.

"Then don't spurn a good offer before you know what it is. I have two good eyes and I can see your position easily. You don't know about trade and you haven't any profession; but you are fine-looking caballero, with a good education and manners. So, if you don't want to starve,

you'll have to put those assets to work for you. Is that right?"

"I suppose it is," admitted Don Arturo gloomily.

"Well, then, why do you bawl about honour and all that sort of stuff? I tell you, there's nothing in that. When your stomach is empty, what good is your squeamishness? Now, I can put you in the way of making two hundred thousand pesetas a year, or more. See, do you think it is because I am poor that I take my coffee in this place? No, señor, it is merely because I am an old friend of the proprietor and he does certain services for me. Look at this!"

With an air of bravado, the fat man pulled out a great wallet from his breast pocket, and opened it, showing a hoard of hundred-peseta notes. "Here!" he said patronizingly, taking one of the notes and throwing it down in front of Don Arturo. "Here! Take this, no matter whether you and I come to an agreement or not!"

"When I have earned it," was the dignified reply. Don Arturo pushed the note from him impatiently.

The fat man laughed, showing two rows of yellow teeth that were misshapen but sound and hard-looking. "You are a fine fellow! Well, I respect you, hanged if I don't! I like your spirit! You and I could get along well together. I could trust you. And in my business, you've got to have a partner you can trust."

"What is your business, señor?" asked Cervello abruptly.

"Ah, then, you wish to know?—Well, I will tell you. But first, since you proclaim yourself a man of honour, give me that word of honour that you will reveal to nobody what I shall tell you, in case—in case we do not make a partnership."

Don Arturo hesitated. Then he shook his head. "I do not give my word lightly."

"Well, then, I care not! I am, so to speak, a fisherman."

"A fisherman?" Don Arturo was puzzled. "But you do not look——"

"There are many kinds of fishermen and many kinds of fish. Did you ever hear of sea rabbits?"

The young man shook his head.

"All fish are stupid, but some are stupider than others. The sea rabbit, which we call sometimes *lompo*, or *remora*, will bite at anything, even a bit of red cloth, or sometimes at a bare hook. He is greedy and silly. There are people like that. We call them *bobos*, do we not!"

Don Arturo nodded. "Yes, I know. Boobies."

"Ah, then; I catch them!"

"I do not understand you, señor."

"You have never heard of the Spanish Prisoner, perhaps?"

"The Spanish Prisoner? There are many prisoners in Spanish jails. I do not see——"

"But only one Spanish Prisoner. Only one prisoner who always stays in prison, because he never was in prison, except in the minds of the sea rabbits."

Don Arturo flushed deeply again and stirred as though to quit the table. "You are making jest of me, señor. I will not endure it."

"No, no, señor, I am not making jest of you. It is the simple fact. You have never seen this letter, I suppose? Read it." The fat man drew an envelope from his pocket and unfolded the single sheet of paper that he took from it. He passed it to his companion, and watched the young man's face narrowly as it was being read. And this is what was written, or rather printed, on the paper—for though it looked marvellously like a hand-written document, it was really cleverly printed from a photograph of the original,

so that thousands of copies could be made, each looking like a personal communication:

DEAR SIR:

Being imprisoned here by bankruptcy I beseech you to help me to obtain a sum of 360,000 dollars I have in America being necessary to come here to raise the seizure of my baggage, paying to the Register of the Court the expenses of my trial and recover my portmanteau containing a secret pocket where I have hidden two checks or certificates of deposit payable to bearer for that sum. As reward I will give up to you the third part, viz., $120,000.

I cannot receive your answer in the prison, but you can forward a cablegram to a person of my confidence who will deliver it me addressed as below. Awaiting your answer to instruct you all my secret, I only sign now

C——

First of all, answer by cable, not by letter to

RAMÓN DE SANTA CLARA
Lista Correos 66
Ribas, Spain.

Answer in this way:

YES, YAGER.

After he had read the letter, Don Arturo looked at it blankly for a minute. Then he folded it and returned it to the fat man. "I do not understand, still."

"You said you could read English."

"Yes, señor, I can read the English. But what it means, I do not know. For, if this man who is in prison——"

The big man threw out his hands with a gesture of impatience. "Either you are now making jest of me, or you are extremely innocent, caballero! Do you not see that there is no Spanish Prisoner, except in the mind of the simpleton who gets this letter? I send these letters to Americans, greedy Americans, and let them catch them-

selves on my hook. Many have done so. It is a marvellously easy game, and a safe one."

"It is a swindle!" burst out Don Arturo angrily. "You want me to be a *trampeador!* What insolence! I, Arturo Cervello, a swindler! By the sainted virgin, I ought to slap your face!"

The big man showed neither fear nor embarrassment. Instead, there came into his crafty eyes merely an expression of amusement. "Come, come, caballero!" he said, "this is no way to talk! This is childishness. Have your own way about it, but do not call names. I wanted to put you in the way of earning money—much money. And what harm is there in it? It is true, my object is to take money from the sea rabbits. But what of them? Are they innocent? They want to get something for nothing, do they not? The Spanish Prisoner is a fraudulent bankrupt, and offers them part of his loot! Do they care about that? No, they want the money. So they are bitten where they wish to bite, is it not? Why waste sympathy on them?"

"Do you mean to tell me, señor, that many Americans come over here to Spain to get this imaginary money?" gasped Don Arturo, his astonishment overcoming his anger. "I have always believed the Americans were a clever people."

"Why, of course, most of the people who receive these letters throw them away. That is certain. But if we catch only three or four sea rabbits out of ten thousand pieces of bait, is it not still a fine affair? I have taken no less than thirty thousand dollars from one rabbit. Think of that! One hundred and fifty thousand pesetas of our money!"

"Señor, you are a rascal, and I will have nothing to do with you," grated out the young man, rising from his chair, pale and trembling. "If you were not such a low

fellow, I would make you fight. You dishonour your country. Spain is not rich, but she is noble and unstained. I do not know the Americans well, that is true. It is also true that we fought them in battle some years ago. But I understand that they were generous victors, and perhaps they did us a great service in awaking us from our state of sleepy self-complacency. I bear them no ill-will; and I am not a swindler! *Adiós*, señor."

"Wait, caballero!" cried the big man, lurching to his feet and following Cervello. "You shall at least give me your word of honour that you will say nothing about this. Not that you could do me any ill turn with the police! Don't imagine it! But I do not care to have my business known."

"I shall make no promise about it," shot back Don Arturo crisply.

But the big man waddled after the other, still talking. "You may have occasion to change your mind. In that case, here is my card——"

"I do not wish your card, señor."

"Very well! Then, in case you do not find a position, and you cannot satisfy your belly with this honour of yours, you will find me by inquiring at the coffee shop. I beg you, think it over, señor. It is not——"

"Leave me, or I shall forget myself!" commanded Don Arturo, wheeling about and facing his pursuer threateningly.

The young man went to his luncheon shaking with passion. He felt already something of a criminal. He had been brought up with the highest ideals. His father, born to wealth, had been an incorruptible magistrate. Indeed, Don Arturo understood that his father, a victim of bad investments, could have redeemed his fortune by com-

promising with his sense of right. Instead, he went to the wall and took his family with him. And in so doing, he did even worse by his family, for he made enemies of his creditors, who had shown him how he could, with a little legal juggling, save both his and their money. The result was that wherever the son, Arturo Cervello, went, in search of a position, he got the cold shoulder at the hands of these enemies.

Don Arturo did not know how to go about getting a position. He stammered and blushed, and confessed in every word that he was not fitted for any trade or work, except unskilled labour. The army was closed to him, except as an enlisted man, because he could not buy a commission. There were twice as many government servants as the State required. And thus, little by little, Cervello's purse dwindled, and his mealtimes became farther apart. At last he was turned out of the little room he occupied, because he could not pay the meagre rent.

Then Don Arturo Cervello went down to the docks and gazed for a long time into the water. He thought he would jump in and end it. But the sky was blue overhead, and a load of boatmen were singing a lively chanty, to the accompaniment of a concertina, and a pretty girl, carrying a basket of fish, went past the young man, humming a tune—and life was too precious a thing to lose!

"After all," Cervello asked himself, "what is this honour of mine but a sort of vanity? The officials in the government are mostly feathering their nests. '*Honra y provecho, no caben en un saco ó techo*'—you can't stow honour and gain in a sack together! And at twenty-seven, full of the zest for living, one can't die! Nor can thin, white hands compete with labourers in the ditch. Besides—these simpletons who come over to Spain to fall victims to the scheme

of the fat swindler—they are not honest themselves, and perhaps the fleecing of wolves is no great cheat, after all!" And Don Arturo was hungry. His fine, manly figure, his healthy body, whimpered for good food.

"I'll not do it!" he muttered to himself. "A Cervello cannot become a sharper!" But his feet led him up the Rambla de Santa Monica toward the little coffee shop. He stopped at the corner of the little street and told himself: "It cannot be. Death would be better!" But his feet, not desiring death, took him straight into the shop. He did not know the name of the fat man, but he described him to the proprietor.

"Señor Juan Corcega!" nodded the man. "He is an old friend of mine. He was here this morning, but has gone to his office. I can give you the address. You were talking to him, one day outside, were you not? He told me you might be looking for him sometime."

The perspiration stood out on Don Arturo's forehead. Then this scoundrel had foreseen that his young companion would come back, degraded and humbled! Blindly, almost mechanically, Don Arturo stumbled along the Calle Fernando, till he came to the address furnished him. He found the fat man eating a chicken leg from a greasy newspaper, at a fine walnut desk.

"Oh, it is you, caballero! Have the goodness to be seated. I have been thinking about you, lately. I have looked for no other partner. I am in no hurry. There are reasons why I am not pressing my affairs at the moment. Can we come to an understanding?"

"What do you want me to do?" choked out Cervello.

"In case of what?"

"In case I—I work for you?"

"You look pale, señor. You are not well."

"I have eaten nothing for two days, señor. I cannot beg."

"Poor devil! The first thing I would have you do is to come with me to a restaurant and eat. We shall have a good bottle of Rioja, alhambrado. That will put blood in your veins. Then you should have some clothes—fine clothes, suitable to your breeding as a gentleman. Ah, caballero, I wish I were a gentleman. But one is born that way. However, you should have the best, and at my expense—though you may repay me, if you wish. The finest tailor in Barcelona is the one for you. I, myself—it makes no difference what *I* wear; I manage to get it greasy. And, finally, since there is plenty of time, I will put you in the care of an English gentleman, who speaks also Spanish perfectly, and he will teach you to speak the English language like a native of Inglaterra. The Americans speak the same language, almost. You will then——"

Suddenly Don Arturo's face went ashen, and he toppled from his chair to the floor.

"Mother of God, the young man has fainted! And from hunger!" cried Señor Corcega. He gazed upon the prostrate figure a moment before he picked him up. A whimsical smile hovered on the fat man's mouth. He muttered, with satisfaction:

"He found that his cursed honour does not fill the stomach. An empty bag does not stand upright!"

CHAPTER I

COLONEL ERSKINE FENIMORE was worried. The real-estate development, in which he had sunk all his funds, was not thriving. And it showed no signs of being about to thrive. It looked dead. Possibly it was dead. And there is nothing deader than a real-estate development that has run around in circles a few times, like a sick hen, and then fallen on its ear.

The name of the development was Bellemary. Colonel Fenimore had not named it. This name had been given to it by the owners just preceding the man who sold it to the Colonel. The Colonel never liked the name. He would have called it Fenimore Arms, or Erskine Manor; but the original title was already registered, and he had taken over a vast amount of printed matter and stationery with the sick development, and it seemed unwise to change.

There was nothing genuine about Bellemary except its weakened constitution. The concrete sidewalks had cracked. The shade trees, planted along the streets, had refused to grow. Several decoy dwellings, cheaply built, were occupied by tenants who were attracted by free rent. A corner block of stores, in what was to have been the busiest and fastest growing mart on the Pacific Coast, was occupied at the present moment only by the Sells-Floto Circus, if one might judge by the windows.

From associating so closely and precariously with various developments,. there had come likewise to be very little that was genuine about Colonel Fenimore. He was

a big, florid, good-natured man, always amiable and seldom reliable. He had been born as honest as anyone, no doubt, but very early in life he had entered politics. His title of Colonel was fictitious. He had never been in the army. A governor, in his home state, in gratitude for certain spellbinding done by Mr. Fenimore, had decorated him.

From politics, Colonel Fenimore graduated into oil-well promotion, in Oklahoma. If he had been reckless with facts, as a politician, his mendacity could be said to have come into full bloom in the oil business. By being wise enough not to buy any of the oil stock he was selling, Colonel Fenimore retired from this venture with a modest fortune after the death of his wife, saying frankly that his son and daughter were growing up fast, and he wanted to get into some business where he could use the United States mails without expecting to find a post-office inspector at the door every morning. It was then that the Colonel came to Los Angeles and made the business acquaintances who were later to present him with all the liabilities of Bellemary.

Let it be said for the Colonel, right away, that when he found the expiring real-estate development hanging around his neck, he did not whimper or call names. "It was just a good poker game," he explained to his son and daughter. "I thought I had dealt myself a good hand from the bottom of the deck, but these fellows had enough cards in their sleeves to run a whist club. No; I'm not kicking. What I've got to do with this development is to sell it to the public. If I can do that, I'll have the laugh on that crowd yet."

Now, there were much worse places than Bellemary being sold to the Southern California public. It was really

hard to account for the positive hostility of the public toward Bellemary. It was perhaps one of those inexplainable things, like the preference people show for walking up one side of a business street instead of the other. Why do people flock to a certain theatrical performance when another, equally bad, does no business at all? Nobody knows, not even the Harvard School of Business Administration.

It was curious that, the greater the efforts Colonel Fenimore made to interest the public in Bellemary, the more the public stayed away. One brass band and free luncheon attracted fifty persons. A few weeks later, two brass bands and a better luncheon attracted only thirty-six, and four of them were rival real-estate men. "With three brass bands and a full-course dinner," said the Colonel philosophically, "I could keep people from visiting Central Park, in New York."

Usually there are a great many people from Iowa and South Dakota, in Southern California, who can be induced to take an automobile ride to any real-estate development because they have nothing else to do. They first swathe their right hands in bandages, so that they cannot sign any papers or anything. But Colonel Fenimore's emissaries canvassed the streets of Los Angeles, with the most meagre results. One by one, the Fenimore agents, who worked on commission, either starved to death or went into other occupations that were less respectable but more gainful. Finally, Colonel Fenimore was his own agent; and seemed likely to be his own undertaker.

The Colonel's daughter, Glorietta Fenimore, was at this date twenty-three years old. She had inherited her mother's loveliness of face and figure and her father's amiability and native generosity; and to these she had added some-

thing that neither her father nor mother possessed—a fine, whimsical intellectuality, which was budding into a keen philosophy of life. There was this great difference between the Colonel and his daughter: whatever Glorietta told you, you could believe. The truth—when it was not uselessly unpleasant—flowed as naturally from her mouth as did overstatements from the mouth of her parent. But this did not keep father and daughter from being the best of chums. She was really the balance wheel of the family, after her mother died. She kept the house, she kept the accounts—when there were any to keep—and she mothered the Colonel and her brother Freddie with simple, shrewd affection.

Upon the activities of the Colonel, Glorietta looked with a grim smile of pained amusement and apprehension. She knew that the Colonel cheated himself more than he cheated anyone else. She knew that in his genuine attitudes he was honest enough. It was only when he practised what he thought was business that Mr. Fenimore became confused as to the exact truth. She knew that her father lived in a world of schemes and hopes, which became real and marketable after he had contemplated them a few hours.

Glorietta was not a reformer, so she did not suppose she would be able to make her father anything but what he was. She was beginning to have doubts about brother Freddie, also. Freddie looked like the Colonel, talked like the Colonel, and had the same sense of proportion. Freddie was a young Colonel, who would have been decorated with the title by a governor, if he had known a governor. Freddie was twenty, with a romantic charm which his father said would carry him a long way. Glorietta thought so, too, but she wondered in what direction.

The downright frankness and honesty of the daughter

were shown clearly the day Major Poulson was brought home by the Colonel. Major Poulson was a real major, who as a stripling had been in French's little army in Flanders, in 1914, and limped slightly as a result of it. He did not limp enough, however, to injure his appearance. He was tall, blond, clear of eye. Like all Englishmen who cannot see a joke, he had a fine sense of humour. So, naturally, the Fenimores, when they came to know him well, said he was a splendid fellow but he had no sense of humour. This was partly because he could not laugh at things they thought were funny.

Glorietta liked Sidney Poulson the moment she saw him. She liked him so well, and felt so strongly that he was incorrigibly decent, that, when he told her that he was going to put part of his money into Bellemary, as a partner of the Colonel, Glorietta said, instantly:

"Don't you do it."

"And why not?" asked the Major.

"Because you'll lose it."

"I beg pardon?"

"Because you'll lose it. Bellemary is dead, Major Poulson. We are waiting now for the funeral services to be announced."

The Major grinned delightedly. "Oh, I see what you mean. I thought for a moment you meant—well, that it wasn't quite—ah—on the horizontal, I think you Americans say. As for the development being at present a failure, your father didn't conceal anything about that. He spoke very frankly about it. I know perfectly well, Miss Fenimore, that it's a gamble. I like to gamble a bit, you know. It's perfectly all right. I know quite well what I'm doing. At any rate, it would be too late now. I've already invested."

"Father is a fast worker," commented Miss Fenimore. "When did you meet Father, Major?"

"Day before yesterday, at the Ambassador Hotel."

"Had you been in Los Angeles long?"

"No, Miss Fenimore. I had just arrived, in the afternoon of the day before."

"Well, Major," said Glorietta, "if you hadn't met Father, you'd have probably met somebody else. I suppose it's all for the best, as they say. Have you met my brother, Frederick?"

"Yes. Nice chap, he seems. Your father introduced us at luncheon to-day."

"Freddie is a nice boy. He hasn't settled down yet, of course. And he's reckless. But at heart, Freddie is all right. Don't lend Freddie any money, Major."

Sidney Poulson smiled vaguely. He didn't understand Glorietta. He had never, in all his limited experience with women, met anyone quite like her. After a moment's thought, the Major ventured the frank suggestion:

"If I might say so, Miss Fenimore, isn't it a bit unusual —I mean your attitude toward the—ah—development and toward your family?"

"Not in the least, Major. I love my father and brother. I do, indeed. They know it. They also know that I see things in my own way. As for the development, Major, I know that, too. I remember it when the sidewalks weren't cracked and when some of the trees were alive. I don't want to seem disloyal to Father. I dare say, if you were a Greek restaurant man, I wouldn't have advised you against investing. But, of course, if you had been a Greek, you wouldn't have invested. But I'd like to have you for a friend, Major—I mean your sort of man——"

"But that's just it, Miss Fenimore. We shall be friends.

It's good of you to put it that way. I think it's splendid." The Major was genuinely flattered and pleased and tapped his toothbrush moustache nervously.

"Well, I hope so. We'll shake on it." She held out her hand, and they shook heartily.

"I hope to see a good deal of you," said the Major, with shy bluntness. "As to your brother Freddie, I—that is——"

"You've already made him a small loan?"

"Yes."

"Freddie is a fast worker, too, Major. Perhaps it's the climate. You've noticed our climate?"

"Ripping, isn't it?"

"Yes. And you and Father are going to sell it, now."

"I beg pardon?"

"I mean, when you sell lots in the development, you'll be talking a good deal about climate. I shall want to stand under my umbrella some day this winter and hear you sell the sunshine."

"Odd girl!" was the Major's comment, on his way back to the hotel. "But she's rather splendid, you know."

"I'm sorry!" said Glorietta wistfully, as she sat down and reconstructed the tall, fine military figure in her imagination. She guessed he was about thirty-two or-three. She knew he was unmarried, because he had the unmarried look. She was sorry because, in that instant of perception that is more to a woman than years of knowledge, she knew that Poulson was quite the finest man she had ever met. And though she was not prepared to say what she would do about it, she knew that this investment, as the Major hopefully termed it, would somehow stand between them, in case they should ever want to be more than friends.

Glorietta's conversation with the Major took place

while her father was dressing for dinner—a dinner at the Ambassador Hotel, given by Poulson in celebration of his entrance into the partnership. The Major's understanding was that it was to be a twosome, at which the business affairs of his new venture could be discussed. He could not remember having invited Freddie Fenimore. He was not absolutely sure. In a moment of abstraction, he might have. Anyway, Freddie went along; and directed the proceedings. After a while, the Major wished Freddie had not come along. The Colonel's son did all the talking; and all the talking was about automobiles, the motion pictures, and flapper friends of Freddie. The development did not get itself discussed much.

While Freddie talked, his father sat with a proud parental smile, once in a while looking inquiringly at his new partner as if to say: "Don't you admire him as much as I do?"

Frankly, the Major, who, for the first ten minutes, was amused and puzzled by Freddie's flow of American slang, began to be fed up with Freddie. He began to wonder just how much he would have to come in contact with this loquacious young man. This was something he was to find out, later.

When Colonel Fenimore returned home, he found Glorietta sitting up, reading a magazine. The Colonel came into the drawing room, rubbing his hands with satisfaction. "Well, Glory," he said to his daughter, "that was a good stroke of business, eh? A great stroke of luck. How do you think I met the Major? Sheer accident. Met him in the hotel lobby, and he asked me something or other, and we got to talking, and I told him my business and—there you are."

"There *he* is," corrected Glorietta.

"What do you mean, Glory?"

"I mean, I wish you hadn't let the Major into this. He looks like an intelligent man. How could he be so foolish?"

The Colonel's jaw dropped. He was astounded and grieved. "Glory!" he cried admonishingly, "what do you mean by that? Do you mean to say that I've taken any unfair advantage of him? Why, all I did was to tell him about Bellemary."

"All you ever have to do is to talk, Dad. That's your unfair advantage over people who don't know you. Dad, you know as well as I do that the Major will never see a cent of his money again. That silly development——"

"I know nothing of the sort, young woman!" stormed the Colonel. "All I needed was capital to put Bellemary on her feet. With this new capital, we can make things hum. If I size the Major up right, he has the elements of a salesman, in his quiet, refined way——"

"If I size the Major up right, he couldn't sell sugar to a candy factory," replied Glorietta. "The Major is a gentleman. He's the sort of man people are glad to meet outside office hours.—But that isn't the point. I'm just brimming over with things I've wanted to say to you for months and months, Dad. I don't want to hurt your feelings. Haven't I always been loyal? Haven't I worked, and sympathized, and listened, and tried to see your point of view, ever since Mother died?"

"Yes, you have, Glory. You've been a wonderful little girl. But——"

"Let me get this all out of my system, Dad, please. I'm so sick of this way of living, I don't know what to do. I don't say you're dishonest, Dad—at least, well, not too dishonest. But couldn't you manage to get into some business where I shan't always be afraid every man who comes to

the door has a warrant with him? I'd be content to live in a little house on some back street, if we could pay the grocer, and not have people threatening to take away the furniture."

"Yes, yes, but that's all over now, Glory. No more of that. I'm sorry, little girl, you've had to——"

"I know what you mean. We're going to pay off our debts with Major Poulson's money and start all over again. That's just what I'm coming to. This nice, innocent major is going to lose every cent he puts into that ridiculous development."

"Not a penny, not a penny!" stormed the Colonel. "You watch us jump the minute I get things moving, now. I'll make a rich man of Poulson. Dammit, he can go back to England and buy Buckingham Palace, or wherever King Edward lives——"

"It's King George, now, Dad. But that's nothing. The point is, I don't want to be selfish, but I don't want to always have my acquaintance limited to perfect strangers. I don't want to get married yet, Dad; but I'd like to feel that I could if I wanted to. Just as soon as a man comes along that I think I could be interested in, Dad, you sell him something. There was that nice chap who owned the laundry in Kansas City. The one you sold the Leap-Frog Oil Company stock to. We haven't heard from him since. Then there was the lawyer in Denver. Was it copper stock he bought, or was it that washing-machine company? Anyway, we've never seen him again. And now it's the Major. A few months from now, he won't even come to the house to say that he's sailing for England. He'll send a telegram from New York, maybe, or we'll get a postcard from London."

"Now, Glory——"

"Just a minute, Dad, and I'll be done! What are you going to do with Freddie? Is Freddie going to get a job, or isn't he? Do you think it's good for him to be running around, spending all the money he can wheedle out of you and me, wearing good clothes that aren't paid for, and borrowing money from anybody silly enough to lend it to him? Did you know that he was arrested for speeding again day before yesterday?"

"No; was he?"

"Yes, he was. He talked the judge into letting him have a month to pay his fine, and he borrowed two dollars from the policeman who arrested him. Then he got five gallons of gasoline on credit and went for a joy ride. I think for anyone as old as Freddie is, he could do something more worth while."

"It's my fault, Glory," was the sober response. "You're absolutely right, but it's my fault. You see, I figured that as soon as I could get a little new capital, and start things going at Bellemary, I'd have Freddie work with me. So I haven't encouraged him to get a job with anybody else. I'll have to have a heart-to-heart talk with Freddie. That boy has great possibilities. We've got to develop them."

There was a silence, during which Colonel Fenimore sat with folded hands, gazing earnestly at the rug. He swallowed hard several times and then began, in a hurt way: "Glory, the thing that cuts me is to have you say that I'm a failure. That's pretty rough. Maybe I am a failure. Maybe all the money and time I've put into that development is wasted effort. Maybe I'm a swindler. Perhaps I've picked Poulson's pocket."

"Oh, I didn't mean that, Dad! I think you deceive yourself more than anyone else."

"But you think he'll never see his money back. You

can't believe, with me, that as soon as we get Bellemary up over the hill, she'll ride down the other side like a coasting automobile. You can't see that all the effort I've put into that development is going to bear fruit, now that we've got money enough to advertise on a big scale. You haven't any faith in me. Oh, well, maybe I am a failure."

The dejection of Colonel Fenimore was too real, too acute, for Glorietta to withstand. She laid aside her common sense, dutifully, as she had done so many times before, and put her arms around her father's neck and hugged him. "Maybe I'm wrong about it, Dad. I hope I am. At any rate, I won't talk that way any more. We must all get together now and work hard. I'll do my share; you know that."

"But I'm a failure," moaned the Colonel, who was now in the mood requiring great sympathy and attention. The Colonel was always up or down—never midway.

"I didn't say you were a failure, Dad. You're not a failure. That's a silly notion. I do think you ought to get more out of your talents. But perhaps the tide is just turning. Of course, I had no right to say that the Major hasn't business ability, either. That was sheer presumption. It may be he's the very man you need."

Under this assuaging influence, the Colonel became himself again. His eyes brightened, and he smote the arm of the chair with his clenched hand. "The real campaign starts next week!" he cried. "You watch us go!"

"But I do think Freddie should go to work," added Glorietta.

"You're right about that, Glory. He's going to. Monday morning, early, I'll have Freddie in harness. That boy has selling ability. He's a chip off the old block, that way."

CHAPTER II

THE development did not hum, as Colonel Erskine Fenimore had predicted it would. Or, at least, if it did any humming, it was of the faint, desultory kind, like that of a late autumn fly, expiring upon the windowpane. In spite of all the advertising, all the high-pressure efforts, the music, the luncheons, and the reckless use of motor cars, the first week of the ensuing year found Bellemary Development Company, Incorporated, again at the end of its resources.

Colonel Fenimore was worried and despondent; Freddie Fenimore was surprised and displeased; and Glorietta was bitterly disappointed. Of the quartette of hopeful co-workers, only Major Poulson was light-hearted and undismayed. "It appears to be a washout," he commented cheerfully. "And now that I've had a chance to look the place over at leisure, I've got a much higher opinion of American judgment than I had. I'm jolly sure I shouldn't want to live in Bellemary myself."

"But you've lost your money, Major," said Glorietta, with dreary sympathy.

"Of course. But I've some left, you know. I wasn't such a duffer as to put everything I had into Bellemary. I'm thinking of going into the motion-picture business."

"Oh, surely not!" cried Glorietta. "You mustn't let anyone bamboozle you into financing one of these hopeless pictures that would never have a chance in the world of getting sold to the distributors."

"Oh, rather not!" was the buoyant reply. "I know all about that. I'm thinking of becoming an actor. I've been out on the lot quite a lot." The Major reflected and tapped his moustache genially. "On the lot, quite a lot! That's rather good, Glorietta, isn't it?"

"Not so good," replied Glorietta frankly.

"Isn't it? Let me see: on the lot, quite a lot. No, you're right. It isn't so good, is it? It rather creaks, doesn't it? Still, I've been looking them over out at Hollywood, and they think I could fit in somewhere. I'm expecting a wire from Mr. Rosebloom—he's the big manager I was talking with—as soon as he gets back to New York and discusses it with his partners."

"Have you ever been an actor, Major?"

"Certainly not. What an idea!"

"Did you tell this Mr. what's-his-name that you'd had no experience?"

"Not a bit of it. I told him I'd played with Irving. He said, 'Irving who?' Fancy his not knowing Irving! So I told the silly ass 'Washington Irving,' and he made a note of it in his memorandum book. I'm expecting a wire from him, provided he doesn't find out that Washington Irving wasn't an actor.—Oh, I'm learning the California ways, Glorietta. I'm a perfect whale of a liar, if I do say it."

"Yes, you are learning a good deal that you shouldn't learn, Major. I've seen it coming on. I think it's dreadful for a man like you to get mussed up with such things. Anyway, even if you get a wire from this motion-picture manager, you mustn't pay any attention to it. When theatrical people haven't much of anything to say, they write a letter; but when they haven't anything at all to say, they send a telegram. I hope you won't mind my saying it,

Major, but you ought to go back to England before you get hopelessly demoralized."

"I'm hopelessly demoralized already, Glorietta. And don't call me 'Major.' I thought we agreed about that."

"Sidney, then."

"I'm hopelessly demoralized already, and I rather like it. I didn't sell a lot of lots—hello! there's that lot business back again—how would *this* go: 'I didn't sell a lot of lots, but I find I like the lot a lot'—does that sound any better?"

"Don't be silly."

"Righto! I won't. I'm going to be serious, now. Glorietta, I've been thinking of going back to England, myself. I'll go if you'll marry me."

"I thought you just promised not to be silly."

"That isn't silly. At least, it isn't silly of me. It might be silly of you to consent. Still, it does no harm to ask. I never was more serious in my life. I love you, Glorietta. If you'll marry me, I'll go back to England, or anywhere else you like. Really, I'd prefer to stay here. There's a coal strike over at home, and the sun won't shine again until May, and altogether it'll be rather dismal. But we can go over there if you prefer."

"Oh, dear, now you've started *that* subject again."

"But I like that subject, Glorietta. I talk about it whenever I get the chance. The last time I spoke of it, you said you'd consider——"

"Yes, and I have considered. I don't want to marry you, Sidney. I like you very much. I like you better than any man I have ever met. But there isn't any use thinking about it. I do not love you. I could never marry a man, or love a man, who proposed to me with a grin on his face."

"A grin? Oh, really, Glorietta, you don't mean that. I swear I don't grin. There may be some peculiarity about my facial muscles——"

"There *is* something peculiar about your facial muscles, Sidney. You don't take things seriously enough. I know you've been a wonderful sport about this Bellemary affair that my father got you into. You've been a trump from start to finish. You've been so game about it that my father thinks you haven't much sense, because he's used to people who begin to talk loud and stamp up and down and drop hints about the police, when they lose their money. But love is different, Sidney. A woman doesn't like to be treated casually. She wants to hear a lot—no, I don't mean a lot—a *good many* pretty things said to her, and she wants to be wooed in a knightly fashion. She doesn't want to have a man say, 'Marry me and I'll move to London,' just as though he were saying, 'Wrap this up and I'll take it along.'"

"But, dash it, I thought you were just the sort of girl that would laugh at a chap who tried any of those knightly dodges," said the Major.

"I'm just the sort of a girl who would discount knightly dodges about ninety per cent., but who likes to hear and see and feel them just the same. Did you ever hear of Valentino, Sidney?"

"Rather. He was the saint responsible for all the silly rubbish people send each other on the fourteenth of February."

"Nonsense. How can you be so stupid? The idea of wanting to be a motion-picture actor when you never even heard of Valentino, the perfect lover! Well, if you had ever seen Valentino on the screen, you would know what I mean. Don't you know how women raved over that man?

It wasn't *him*, you see; it was just that, when he made love to the heroine, every woman who saw him pictured herself in that situation, and thought how wonderful it would be to be loved like that by some man she cared for. Valentino would never, never have said, 'Marry me, and I'll take you to England.'"

"Now you recall it to me, I've seen the chap," reflected the Major. "I see what you mean. Give me another chance, Glorietta, and I'll try to come up to your expectations. I took part in a masquerade, once, dressed like a bullfighter, and it was the consensus of opinion that I was poisonously passionate."

Glorietta sighed. "You just couldn't do it, Sidney. Besides, that isn't all. I'm terribly hurt and humiliated at the way you've lost all that money through my father. Not that he had any intention of cheating you, I think you know he didn't. But the money is gone just the same. Don't you see what a barrier that raises between us, Sidney? We can be friends, of course. But—can't you see what that sort of thing would mean to a woman?"

"Dashed if I can. Your governor is all right. He's a great card. Sometimes, when I think of the way we tried to sell those lots, of those conferences we used to have, and all that brain work we put into our advertising, I begin to laugh until I choke. It's a wonderful experience. Why should that make any difference between you and me? You know, Glorietta, I nearly sold one of the Bellemary lots to a Canadian. I had him fairly hypnotized with my eloquence. Dash it, I didn't know I had such magnetic power before. He would have bought anything I wanted to sell him."

"And you didn't sell the lot to him?"

"No, the chap had no money. Still, we got along fa-

mously. His people came from North Devon, near where my grandfather lived. I believe that was the nearest I came to making a sale. Close shave, eh?"

"A close shave for the Canadian, I should say!"

"Beg pardon? For the Canadian? Oh, yes, I see! That's neat, Glorietta. You mean if he had bought the lot, he would have had to live in the bally development, so it was a narrow escape for him.—You know, it's that sort of wheeze that makes me so fond of you, Glorietta. Now, some women would be downhearted, if they had the sort of luck you have. But you always come up smiling, with a quip like that.—You'll give me another chance, won't you?"

"There was one other thing, Sidney," went on Glorietta. "I mean, something that would make it impossible for me to dream of marrying you. I mean, my father and brother. A man would be silly to think of marrying a family like mine—and that's what it means until things turn for the better. I wouldn't leave poor old Dad, under present conditions, and I'm not sure that Freddie doesn't need me, too. See how completely out of the question it is, Sidney! Let's not talk about it any more."

"I don't see much in that," insisted the Major. "I like your father and he likes me. We get along famously. He has a way of slapping one on the back which is perfectly annihilating. Of course," added Major Poulson, after a reflective moment, "I wouldn't go so far as to say I care much for your young brother. I don't think we understand each other. Er—in fact, we had a bit of a row. I hope you don't mind."

"I didn't know what it was about. Freddie wouldn't tell me. I'm sorry. I hoped that you would be good friends."

"Oh, we are good friends," insisted the Major. "That is, I'm a good friend of Freddie's. But the lad is so hectic

and emotional! Now, this row was over nothing at all. I was trying to do him a good turn."

"But surely Freddie isn't ungrateful. I know he's a trifle light-headed and acts before he thinks, but his heart is in the right place. Perhaps he didn't understand."

"I don't know. It seemed plain enough to me. You see, Glorietta, since Freddie wasn't much use to us in the development and was a bit of a bore all around, and I thought perhaps he was something of a burden to you and your governor, I tried to enlist him in the navy."

"You tried to enlist him in the navy! I don't see what you mean. Freddie wouldn't want to be in the navy."

"I know. He said so. But I thought he ought to be in the navy. I helped him to half a bottle of real Scotch and took him down to the enlistment office, and he rather made a fool of me. Said he didn't want to enlist, or some rot like that, after I had as good as promised the chap there that I'd bring him a man. One thing led to another, and I suppose we became excited. Naturally, I had had the other half of the bottle of Scotch. The naval chap threw us both out, and you could hardly blame him for that. That's what there was in it.—I still insist Freddie ought to be in the navy."

"Well, I don't know now it is in the British navy, Sidney," said Glorietta severely, for she felt that the Major had been in the wrong in the matter, "but there isn't any future for an enlisted man in the American navy."

"That's just it," agreed Poulson. "If there was any future, I wouldn't have urged Freddie into it. Freddie is a young man who couldn't do with a future, as I see it. There is nothing but present for Freddie. You know that, Glorietta."

"I refuse to discuss my brother in that way," concluded

Glorietta. She felt that there was a good deal of truth in what the Major said, but her family pride commanded her to take up Freddie's defence. Besides, she was disposed to quarrel with Major Poulson, particularly as she felt that he had been badly treated by her father and brother; and it is a distinct relief to be able to find fault with someone you have wronged. "I don't think it was a bit nice of you, Major. I am angry with you."

"It seemed, under the circumstances, that either Freddie or I ought to enlist, since I had promised to bring a recruit," pursued the Major mollifyingly.

"Then why didn't you enlist, yourself?"

"But then I couldn't marry you, Glorietta."

"You can't marry me anyway. Please go away, now."

The Major went away, but he returned. He went away many times, and always returned. Glorietta would have been infinitely sorry if the Major had not returned. She liked him tremendously. He was as genuine as debt. His good-nature was invulnerable. He never was off his feet. There, indeed, was the trouble. Glorietta wished ardently, now and then, that the perfect equanimity of the Major would take a holiday, just once, and that he would fly into a passion, storm, rage, even curse. But he did not.

She winced as she considered that not only had the Major abyssed his investment in Bellemary, but her young brother had borrowed money and hadn't paid it back. Glorietta would have paid it all, herself, but she didn't have it. Many times she told herself that she would not see Poulson again. She felt miserable in his presence. But, more subtly than she realized, the Major possessed her spare time and her admiration.

For one thing, Poulson's skill in languages astonished

and appalled Glorietta. He spoke German and French. He pretended to have only a smattering of Italian, but on one occasion he chatted pleasantly with a fruit vendor, and explained that he knew "a few words of the Neapolitan dialect." One day, on the street in Los Angeles, a tall and handsome East Indian, with a white turban, seemed to sense that Poulson, behind his mufti, was a British army officer. He saluted and questioned the Major, and they talked for a long time. "Oh, yes," explained the Major to Glorietta, "I happen to know a few words of Bengali. Odd, wasn't it? But then, I happened to be born in India."

"Is there any language you don't know, Sidney?" asked Glorietta.

"I have difficulties with the American language," replied the Major. "But I'm learning. Believe me, I am some baby, bo."

"You had better stick to your native language, Sidney," advised Glorietta. "When you talk American slang, you remind me of an archbishop in tights."

CHAPTER III

ONE morning, just as Major Poulson was shaving with an old-fashioned Sheffield razor—for he had not become altogether Americanized, though he was acquiring the language rapidly—the telephone rang. It was Glorietta on the other end of the wire, and she was obviously in a state of unusual agitation. "I can't tell you over the telephone, Sidney," she said, "but I wish you could come out to the house at once. I need help."

The Major was a man to be depended upon in any emergency. He speeded the razor, sliced his chin, plastered it, and rushed out to the Fenimore home in a taxi. Glorietta, hearing the chauffeur's horn at the street corner, was waiting at the door. She had been weeping; something rather novel for her, and her voice trembled as she spoke:

"Sidney, I hated to bother you, but you were the only one I could call upon. Father is on his way to Spain."

"To Spain?" The Major considered the information with the swiftness, if not the reflectiveness, of a good soldier. "Jolly nice country," he replied. "A bit buggy, and you can't trust the drinking water, but there's a——"

"Major Poulson!" cried the young woman. "Do you understand what has happened? Don't you realize that my father is nearly sixty years old and has never been outside the United States? Do you think I called you out here to tell me about Spain? I'm nearly crazy with worry. Why should my father go to Spain? That's what I want to know?"

"He may be thinking of starting a development——" began the Major seriously. That was as far as he got. Glorietta swallowed hard and turned away. "I'm sorry I called you!" she faltered. "I might have known you wouldn't be any possible use."

"Oh, but I can be a great deal of use," insisted the Major. "Give a fellow a little time to think, Glorietta. You know your father is a natural developer, isn't he? I merely said that, though, to give myself time to think. Let's see: yes, yes, of course! If he has gone to Spain, he can't be any further east, by this time, than Arkansas, or one of those silly provinces near the Yellowstone Park. Simply put a wire on the train to arrest him and bring him back. Now, there's an idea."

"He filed the telegram in Salt Lake yesterday!" choked out Miss Fenimore. "He said he was going to Denver, when he left here. But he had no intention of going to Denver! Look at this!" She handed the Major a telegram, which she had received a short time before. It was a night letter, and sent collect:

MY DEAR DAUGHTER STOP DO NOT WORRY STOP I AM ON WAY TO SPAIN ON BUSINESS STOP WILL EXPLAIN LATER NATURE OF BUSINESS BUT REST ASSURED OUR DEVELOPMENT WILL HAVE PLENTY OF NEW CAPITAL SOON STOP OUR LUCK HAS TURNED STOP YOUR LOVING FATHER

"This doesn't say he is going on a boat," was the Major's comment. "Here's an idea, what? Perhaps this Spain he is talking about is a town somewhere near Chicago or Boston. You Americans have a way of naming places like that, you know. Just the other day I heard a lady talking

about her adventures in Venice, and I discovered that she had merely been in Venice, California."

"No, it wouldn't be that," replied Glorietta, shaking her head. "You see, Sidney, I've found some papers on his desk, and two envelopes with Spanish postage stamps on them. There is a man named Ramón de Santa Clara, of Ribas, Spain, mixed up in it. I didn't find the exact letter, but father had scribbled some notes on a memorandum pad and left them behind. Here it is! See, there's something about bankruptcy, and $360,000, and something about answering by cable. Can you make anything of that?"

Suddenly Major Poulson snapped his fingers, and gave a low whistle. "I've got it, Glorietta! I knew I could help you if I had time to think. Your father has gone to Spain to rescue the Spanish Prisoner. It's as clear as daylight. It's a swindle—one of the oldest swindles in the world. I heard of a London merchant who went to Spain to help this same Spanish Prisoner. It cost him six thousand pounds, and the Spanish police put him in jail for being a suspicious character. And worst of all, the *Daily Mirror* printed his picture when he got home."

"That sounds possible," agreed Glorietta. "I believe I've read something about the Spanish Prisoner swindle myself. There's a piece in the papers about it, now and then. But poor Father wouldn't have seen it, because he reads only the real-estate news and the comic pictures; and he doesn't laugh at the pictures. Tell me all you know about this swindle, Sidney, quick!"

"Why, dash it, let's see if I can remember. It goes like this, I believe: you get a letter from one of these bandits, supposed to be in prison for bankruptcy, saying that he has thousands of pounds hidden away in an old trunk, but the trunk is in another country. He needs ready cash, and

if you supply the cash, he will give you part of his vast fortune which is in the trunk. I believe it goes like that. Naturally, there isn't any prisoner, and there isn't any trunk. There's only the ready cash, and the victim supplies that.—As I said before, Glorietta, why can't you send a telegram to the conductor of the train and have your father arrested? You could say that he is an escaped lunatic."

"But Father doesn't act like a lunatic or talk like one," objected Glorietta. "You know how well Father talks. Father, by this time, has made a bosom friend of the conductor and is helping him conduct the train. Father would merely say that the message was a practical joke sent by the Rotary Club. No, that wouldn't bring him back. I must see him and talk with him, to do any good. Dad is headstrong, you know."

"There's something in that," admitted the Major. "Did your father have much money with him, do you think, Glorietta?"

"That's the strange part of it. I don't see where he got the money even to get to New York. Of course, he may have borrowed it. There are a good many strangers coming into Los Angeles every day."

"I believe the first thing to find out is what ship your father is sailing on. If it should be a slow boat, we might leave at once, and get there almost as soon as he does. If we could catch the *Mauretania*, for example, we might be on the dock when he landed. Or on the quay at Calais, possibly."

"*We?* You don't mean——"

"I meant, if you wanted *us* to go over and bring him back. It would be rather a lark, wouldn't it? I should be glad to get tickets at once."

"You will do nothing of the kind, Sidney Poulson," objected Glorietta quickly. "I appreciate it. It's splendid of you to think of it. But you mustn't waste any time or money on this. Of course *I* shall follow him. And Freddie——"

"Oh, I say, you wouldn't take Freddie!" cried the Major. "You'd better take me. Freddie ought to stay here and look after the development. You see, I could be a great help to you, really. I know a smattering of Spanish."

"You know Spanish! Of course you do. You know all languages. I hadn't thought of that. And I don't know anything but my own language! Still, Freddie and I will get along. Not that I don't think it's splendid of you to offer your help. I shall always remember it."

"But I don't want you always to remember it, Glorietta. I want you to accept it. Now, if you wanted a chaperon, I've a dear old aunt who could join us in Cherbourg——"

"Don't be absurd! I don't need any chaperon, especially with a man like you. That isn't it! I've made up my mind. Fortunately, this house is in my name, and I've never allowed Father to put a mortgage on it. I can raise enough money on it to pay our expenses. Poor old Dad! Just think of him, wandering away alone, like this, on a wild-goose chase. He needed money so badly! I suppose his need blinded him to the swindle in this."

"I could be a help to you on this cruise, Glorietta," suggested the Major mildly. "You'd better not turn me down rashly. Stop and think."

"Oh, please don't tempt me! It isn't fair. I know you could be of wonderful help. But I have no right to let you. Unless—unless you had absolutely nothing to do, and would enjoy the trip, and would let me pay all the expenses. If you would do that, it might be——"

"Let's be sporting about it. We'll Dutch it, as they say!" said the Major, with great animation in his blue eyes. "I'll pay my own way and you pay yours, if you like. To-day is Wednesday. Just too late to reach New York by Saturday. But we could get the Wednesday sailing on the Cunard Line—the express steamer. If your father takes a slow boat, I'm sure we could catch up with him."

Glorietta suddenly reached out a hand impulsively. "I'll do it!" she cried. "I don't know how I can ever repay you. But, of course, I couldn't leave Freddie. Freddie has a right to go, you see. Indeed, Freddie couldn't do otherwise. I'm sure he'll see it that way. You understand, Major?"

"I'm afraid I don't, Glorietta. Freddie ought to be in the navy. I've never changed my mind about that. But if Freddie must go, of course he must go. Only, I'm afraid the Europeans wouldn't understand Freddie. Except the Russians. Do you suppose he'd like to spend his time in Moscow while we are finding your father?"

But Glorietta didn't hear. Already she was considering the ways and means and the necessary packing. "If you could somehow find out what ship Father is sailing on," she said to the Major, "that would help. I'll find Freddie, and then go to the bank. Oh, it does seem a pity to involve you in this! But if you really insist on going, I suppose you may as well arrange for the tickets. Perhaps Dad, not knowing any other language except his own, will not get any farther than the French port where he lands, Sidney?"

"I wouldn't count on that. I've seen a great many people go all through Europe by waving their hands, nodding, and grunting," replied the Major. "I don't know how they do it, dash me if I do, but they do it. No, I certainly shouldn't count on that."

By going to all the principal steamship companies, Major Poulson learned that Colonel Fenimore had actually taken passage on an eight-day boat, so called, which, during the winter season, might well prove to be still slower. It was the *Synoptic*, of the White Star line. And, as it was bound for Liverpool, this meant that an additional two days was in favour of the pursuers. The *Synoptic* was a cabin boat, indicating that whatever the Colonel's financial condition might be, he was clearly economizing in his travelling expenses.

"Supposing the *Synoptic* does the voyage in ten days," said the Major to Glorietta, "and I should hardly expect it to do better at this season, we shall add two days from Liverpool to Paris. Your father would want that much time to prepare for the rest of his journey. I should think, then, that we should be only three or four days, at most, behind him in Barcelona."

"But how do you know that he will go to Barcelona?"

"I should imagine so. This place called Ribas is a village or small town in the province of Cataluña."

"Passports!" exclaimed Glorietta suddenly. "We need passports, don't we!"

"My word! Passports!" echoed the Major. "I was forgetting the beastly things! The chap down at the travel agency reminded me of them. He thinks if we send on applications at once, we can get them, delivered in New York, by sailing day. But I've got a rather clever idea, Glorietta. Leave Freddie at home, marry me, and I'll have the British consul include you on *my* passport. In that way, we can sail at once."

"Under the circumstances, Sidney, I think it would be nice of you not to bring up that subject. Especially when I'm under such obligations to you. It isn't quite fair.

You know I couldn't do any such thing, just now, even——"

"I didn't think you would. But it's rather a clever idea, though, isn't it?"

"We shall have to wait for passports, I suppose," sighed Glorietta. "But we'll wait in New York. I shall feel better for being that much nearer poor old dad."

"Right!" agreed the Major.

They left Los Angeles on the Santa Fe train that night. Freddie tried to bring along two pistols, a bag of golf clubs, and a pair of dice.

"I say, do you think we're going to war, Freddie?" asked the Major. "Glorietta, ask your brother to leave that young arsenal at home. It might get us into trouble."

"Leave those guns at home, Freddie," ordered Glorietta.

"And they don't play golf in Spain," added the Major.

"Leave your clubs, Freddie," commanded the sister.

But Freddie clung to his dice. On the way to Chicago he got acquainted with three travelling salesmen and won thirty dollars shooting craps. From Chicago to New York, Freddie lost the thirty dollars playing poker. Freddie and the Major did not see much of each other, on the transcontinental journey. It was an interesting fact, however, that the only time they spoke, except to say "Good-morning," during the trip, the Major lent Freddie some money.

CHAPTER IV

MEANWHILE, Colonel Fenimore, snugly stowed aboard the *Synoptic*, was having the time of his life. Never having heard much about seasickness, and therefore being unafraid of it, he escaped that calamity altogether. The *Synoptic* danced and lurched, and took thousands of tons of cold North Atlantic water over her bows, but the Colonel only waxed more entertaining and loquacious for it. By the time they had passed Cape Race, the real-estate development of Bellemary was known to all the passengers who were well enough to listen, and, in the Colonel's retrospect, it loomed as a hustling metropolis.

The Colonel was in high spirits. The first letter from Ramón de Santa Clara, inviting Erskine Fenimore to become the saviour of a Spanish gentleman imprisoned for bankruptcy, and thereby to obtain the handsome sum of $120,000—the third part of that fortune which was hidden in a certain portmanteau—had come just when the Colonel's fortunes seemed at the lowest ebb. The Colonel had said nothing to his daughter about the letter, nor to his son. He considered the "proposition," and it engaged him. He felt that it would do no harm to risk a cablegram to the Spanish Prisoner and become possessed of more facts. So, two months before, he had cabled as follows:

YES. YAGER.

Thereupon, after a few weeks of impatient waiting, another letter had come from Spain; but not this time from

Ramón de Santa Clara. That good man, after languishing so long and painfully in jail, was dead. Dead! The Colonel's heart went out to him, across the mountains, the prairies, and the broad ocean. But, of course, the Colonel's heart did not go out quite so completely that he was unable to examine what followed. The new correspondent, a priest and confidant of the deceased prisoner, reported to Colonel Fenimore that almost the last words of the bankrupt had been: "Get the good Colonel to come to Spain and take charge of my affairs. See that he becomes the guardian of my beautiful orphaned daughter, who will now be the sole heir to my fortune."

The Colonel, always a sentimental man, flushed with pride and pleasure when he read this. A beautiful señorita, in need of a guardian! What better guardian could there be than himself? He had seen pictures of Spanish señoritas and they were all beautiful, with big, trustful eyes and raven hair. Not that the Colonel, though he was a widower, had the slightest notion of courting such a lovely young female himself. But he thought instantly of Freddie—and a romance built itself up on the spot. An heiress with raven hair and big trustful eyes was exactly what Freddie needed. Altogether, it seemed perfect!

The one cloud in the otherwise gorgeous sky was due to the fact that the Colonel had no money. The priest suggested in his letter that it might be just as well if Señor Fenimore came to Spain armed with at least thirty thousand dollars of American money, to settle the late bankrupt's court fees, satisfy the official itching palms, and so forth. The Colonel had no such amount. If he had had this amount, the bankrupt's letter would not so have enthralled him from the beginning. But Colonel Fenimore had never been the man to refuse an entertaining speculation merely

for lack of money. He felt that it was a poor salesman who could not deal with Spaniards—a people very inferior in intelligence and more endowed with singing and dancing ability than with business acumen, if report were true. Somehow, somewhere along the road to this fortune, the Colonel would, he felt, find the right way to get hold of the portmanteau and achieve the guardianship of Señorita de Santa Clara.

Glorietta had guessed accurately when she assumed that the Colonel must have borrowed the necessary money for the trip. As it seemed to be nothing, however, that Glorietta would be disposed to look upon with favour, the Colonel made his plans without consulting his daughter. Thus, when he had said to Glorietta that he was going for a business trip to Denver, the Colonel was telling a small whopper. But he forgave himself this venial sin on the ground that it was in a good cause.

So, the Colonel sailed on and on, eastward, and the farther he sailed, the more romantic and alluring the whole business became. There was something so dignified, ingratiating, and so healthfully optimistic about him that he won all hearts and confidence. He was a big man, physically, and his tailoring was designed to make him at once conservative without being repellent. He wore his broad-brimmed Stetson hat with an air that was not exactly jaunty but was provocative. As he never spoke of money to strangers—unless it was a question of a temporary loan—in terms of less than thousands, he could not fail to give the impression of wealth. So, those who heard the Colonel describe, somewhat oratorically, the vast riches of Western America, confided to each other:

"That great real-estate development he talks about is

probably only a plaything. No doubt the Colonel owns oil wells or mines."

One of the Colonel's favourite sayings was a quotation from the late J. Pierpont Morgan: "Sir, the man who sells the prosperity of the United States short will go broke as sure as God made little red apples!" It is doubtful if Mr. Morgan mentioned little red apples in the original remark. The Colonel added that part from his own rich vocabulary. But the point was that Erskine Fenimore repeated this aphorism in such an effective manner as to convince all hearers that he must have been a friend and co-worker with Mr. Morgan.

The stewards of the *Synoptic* would have received large tips from Colonel Fenimore if that gentleman had been in easier circumstances. They never questioned for a moment that the big American was travelling cabin merely because he preferred the company of the kind of people who travel that way. Nobody, by the way, has ever been known to admit travelling second class for any other reason. The stewards were surprised, then, upon landing in Liverpool, to receive such slight tokens of the Colonel's esteem. But the life of a steward wouldn't be worth living if it were not for the element of surprise contained in it.

To the great relief of Colonel Fenimore, he found that the same language, approximately, was spoken in England as in the United States. Somehow, he had thought Englishmen were foreigners. Of course, they are. But he had thought he would have difficulty in getting about. On the contrary, it seemed that getting about was easier than in New York. From Liverpool to London, and from London to the channel boat, the distinguished visitor travelled with ease and delight. It was only when he arrived at

Calais that he began to realize how far from Los Angeles he was getting.

In Calais, Colonel Fenimore first became aware of the peculiar way in which some foreigners talk, when at home. Nor did they seem to understand him: nor did they seem to try to. In such a case there is only one thing to do. That is, to overawe the foreigner. This the Colonel, at the first opportunity, did. He drew himself up to his fullest stature and put one hand upon his breast and said to the train guard who was trying to prevent him from entering a train for Switzerland:

"Sir, you don't know who I am. I am an American, and my government is the greatest government in the world, and wherever the American flag flies, Liberty lives. Stand aside, you poor boob, or I'll kick you in the uniform."

An American lady, long resident in France, hearing the Colonel's righteous pronouncement, interceded for the train guard at this point. "This is the train for Paris, on this side, sir. That is all the train guard was trying to tell you. If you will follow me, I'll show you."

"Thank you, madam," responded the Colonel, lifting his hat with a cavalier manner. "I thought this fellow was trying to put something over on me. Golly, it seems good to see someone who can talk a regular language."

"If you are going to Paris, you'll find practically nothing but English spoken there, these days," said the lady.

"I am on my way to Spain on a matter of business," explained the Colonel. "I have—ah—some interests in Spain that need looking into."

Those who believe that there are no modern miracles should have been present as the Colonel, without being aware of a single word of French, made his way triumphantly from the Gare du Nord to the Hôtel Pont-Royal—

whose advertisement he had seen in an English newspaper; from there to the American Express Company in the Place Charles Garnier; thence back to the hotel; and later, to the Gare d'Orléans. When his English was not readily understood, the Colonel filled the gap by shouting. His shouts always attracted a crowd, and someone in the crowd could always speak English. Glorietta's fears for her father's safety were absurd. The Colonel was the safest man in Paris. While professors of French from Yale and Princeton were being overcharged, and later arrested for protesting to the police, the Colonel gave the taxicab drivers what he thought they ought to have and stifled their cries with such enormous shouts that they slunk away in shame.

At the Gare d'Orléans, where the Colonel was taking the evening express which goes to Barcelona by way of Montauban, Toulouse, Perpignan, and Port-Bou, the purveyors of pillows and blankets offered their wares to the Colonel under false names. It did not deceive the Colonel.

"*Oreillers ! Couvertures !*"

"Pillow!" cried the Colonel—at the same time picking one up. "Blanket!" he added sternly, and picked up one of those. Whatever the Colonel pointed at came to him. If he had pointed with that same air of authority at the women who rented the pillows and blankets, they would no doubt have come, too.

Colonel Fenimore had tried to engage a berth in the sleeping car, but they were all taken. He had never sat up all night in a train before. It irked him. Nor had he ever ridden so far without talking with someone. His compartment was full, but his companions were Spanish and French. They were polite, and offered conversation to the American gentleman, but all the Colonel could do was to

smile pleasantly and nod. To all inquiries that he considered required an affirmative, he answered, "Yes, it sure is." To all inquiries that seemed to call for a negative, he replied, "I should say *not!*" In this way he beguiled part of the night.

As the first greenish streaks of light appeared in the sky, the Colonel wormed his large and cramped body out of the seat and stretched himself in the corridor. Through the corridor windows, in the dim dawn, the outskirts of Carcassonne were just coming into view. To the eye of Colonel Fenimore, the vineyards and the general contour and colour of the country smacked strongly of Southern California, and a wave of sudden homesickness swept over him. A great sob rose in his throat and stuck. This nostalgic feeling would have overpowered the big man in a few more moments, if he had not suddenly heard a nasal voice, somewhere in the adjoining compartments, crying bitterly:

"Ain't it a darned shame! Gosh, ain't it a shame!"

"An American!" said the Colonel aloud, and straightway moved toward the place whence the sound emanated. At the compartment second from his own, Colonel Fenimore stopped and gazed at the back of an individual about his own size, who was standing, swaying, within the compartment and venting his feelings aloud.

"I say it's a darned shame to sit all night long in front of a pretty little lady who tried to talk with you and you can't speak a word of her lingo. And there's nobody on the train that can speak American."

"I can!" announced the Colonel promptly. "I'm an American, friend! I come from Los Angeles. Where do you come from?"

"Perkins, Iowa," was the response, in a cry of joy, as the other man turned to greet his compatriot.

"Shake, partner!" said the Colonel.

"You bet!" was the reply. And they shook. "My name is Fenimore," added the Colonel. "Mine is Huckins!" was the return announcement. "Say, ain't this a dickens of a country, though? I been sitting up all night in this hen coop, right opposite this pretty little lady who has been trying to talk with me, but we don't understand each other."

"I've been sitting up, too," said the Colonel. "But no pretty lady has been trying to talk to me. My compartment has all been eating garlic ever since midnight. The Colonel looked first at the "pretty lady," who was correctly described by the word "pretty" but perhaps not so accurately by the word "lady." She was viewing both the Americans with a quizzical smile, and was clearly no novice at making chance acquaintances among strangers. Then the Colonel studied the face of his compatriot. The Iowa man was endowed with a tremendous head, a neck carved in proportion, and shoulders like a wrestler. He had a shock of heavy black hair, of the sort that defies the comb. But the most salient characteristic about him was that, though in other respects his face was cheerful and pleasant, his nose was twisted. It was a queer nose. It did not seem to be broken, or deformed, but suggested somehow that, years before, it had been playfully tweaked and had never resumed its normal position. As a result of this defect, Mr. Huckins, viewed from any angle, seemed to be walking sideways, or always in the act of turning his head.

"Come out in the corridor and let's have a little talk," urged the Colonel. "It sure seems good to meet someone from home."

The man with the twisted nose needed no urging. "It's

a godsend to meet an American," he agreed fervently. "Are you going to Spain?"

Colonel Fenimore replied that he was. "I've got some important business," he said. "Nothing less than important business would get me over to this side of the world. I don't know what people see about Europe to rave about. It strikes me as being dirty and 'way behind the times."

"Absolutely!" agreed Mr. Huckins. "I'm going to Spain, too. Maybe we could hitch up and pal around together a little. Know anybody there?"

"N-no, not exactly," admitted the Colonel cautiously. "I've never met these people I'm doing business with. You know anybody?"

"Well, I do and I don't. It's a kind of funny thing, in my case. I've come over to help a poor devil—that is, I can't exactly help him, because he died quite recently, but I've got to take charge of his estate and his daughter. There's a good deal of money involved. I expect incidentally I'll make a pretty handsome thing of it, but I'll be doing a great service, too. Service is the thing, after all, ain't it? To serve your fellow man, I guess that's about the highest thing you can do. We had a swell talk at the Kiwanis Club on that subject, just before I left Perkins. And if you can make a profit while rendering service, that's all the better. That's about my case. As you and I probably sha'n't see each other again, and as you're the kind of man, I can see, that doesn't tell all he knows, I don't mind telling you that I'm over here to settle the estate of a Spaniard—Don Ramón de Santa Clara, his name was——"

Colonel Fenimore's eyes suddenly bulged, actually bulged, from his head. The blood flowed into his face so quickly that he felt giddy and grasped the window rail for support. Ramón de Santa Clara! What did this man mean?

Was it possible—was it credible that—that Huckins had come to Spain on the same errand? But Colonel Fenimore was too keen a strategist to blurt out what was in his mind. He steadied himself, swallowed hard, and then achieved a fair amount of sang-froid, as he asked:

"Ramón de Santa Clara? That's a queer sort of name. And you say you didn't know him? Old friend of your family, maybe?"

"No. It's a queer thing altogether, Mr. Fenimore. I guess these Spaniards don't trust each other much, and this Santa Clara feller wanted an American who could be relied on. He wanted his daughter educated in the United States, too. The senior, which is what they call a man in Spain—the senior got himself into some trouble and was put in prison. I can't go into details, but the senior was a very fine man and very wealthy. I guess, when they get you in prison in Spain, they make it pretty hard for you to get out unless you give up all the money you have. So the senior and his friends heard of me—I don't know how—but I'm pretty well known in the canned-goods trade in Iowa, and I might have been suggested by one of the exporters in our line. If we should happen to finish up our business about the same time and go back on the same boat, I'll tell you all about it and show you the young lady. I'll take her back with me."

"Yes, you will not!" said the Colonel to himself. He saw what had happened! The unlucky Spanish prisoner, trembling on the verge of eternity, and half-crazed with fears for the lovely daughter he was leaving behind, had been afraid to pin his hopes upon one American. Lest something should go wrong, he had naturally tried to cover the possibilities by writing to two Americans—and by a strange stroke of fate, these two Americans had met on the same

train in France, and were now face to face. Yet not so strange, either, for evidently the letters had been sent to both Huckins and himself at the same time, and it was no miracle that they had therefore arrived in Europe about the same date. But, miracle or not, the Colonel saw the prize of $120,000 slipping from his grasp. This man with the twisted nose, who was innocently telling him what he already knew, must be prevented from beating the Colonel to Ribas—wherever the place was.

For an instant, Colonel Fenimore debated the advisability of throwing his cards on the table and saying to Huckins: "I'll tell you, friend, I'm over here to settle this estate myself. There's no use squabbling about it. We're both men of business and used to meeting all contingencies with good grace. We'd better pool our issues, and work this thing together, and split fifty-fifty."

But as he gazed into the face of the man from Iowa, the Colonel thought he perceived a certain selfish, sleek complacence there—the look of a man who had prospered by his own efforts, by going it alone, the look of a man who was not used to compromise. Besides, this Huckins was evidently well pleased with the prospect of becoming the guardian of Señorita de Santa Clara. The Colonel had set his heart upon the beautiful girl's becoming the wife of Freddie, if they should become fond of each other—and he was sure they would. No, it wouldn't do!

In such an emergency, the Colonel made up his mind quickly. He decided upon a bold stroke. The train was already slowed down for a station, and through the window Fenimore saw painted in great red letters, upon the white brick embankment they were passing: NARBONNE.

Narbonne! This was the station where, according to the last cable message he had received from the Spanish priest

—the friend of the late Ramón de Santa Clara—a messenger would board the train, a messenger who could speak English, and make himself known to the Colonel. The Colonel's last act, before leaving Paris, was to send a telegram to one Estevan Pujol, at Port-Bou, Spain, saying that he was leaving on the five o'clock *rapide* from the Gare d'Orléans.

"Narbonne!" exclaimed the Colonel casually. "Funny name, isn't it? Gee, I'd like to get a cup of coffee, wouldn't you? I wonder if we couldn't stretch our legs here?"

"I wouldn't want to get left behind," was the timid reply.

"We can ask one of these brakemen how long it stops."

"Yes, we can ask, but he wouldn't understand us. And if he did, we wouldn't understand him. But I certainly would like a cup of coffee and a sandwich."

"I'll ask," volunteered the Colonel. He did so, and it proved, to the infinite delight of the two Americans, that the guard could speak a little English. "Twenty minutes, messieurs," they were informed. "Change here for Beziers and the Côte d'Azur!"

"Twenty minutes, friend! Plenty of time!" cried the Colonel. "That looks like a café over there. C'mon!" At the same time, the Colonel craftily noted a long train, already made up, with a locomotive puffing at its head, stationed on the track just adjoining. On its side was a sign saying:

BEZIERS, CETTE, NÎMES, MARSEILLES, NICE.

"It's a dirty trick," thought the Colonel, "but I've got to look out for my family. My first thought must be for their welfare." Nineteen anxious minutes followed. The Colonel looked alternately at the big station clock and at

the unsuspecting though worried face of the man with the twisted nose. "C'mon!" cried the Colonel, at last. "We'd better run for it. We mustn't get left. Here's our train. Hop in!"

Mr. Huckins hesitated. "It don't look like our train, comrade," he palpitated. "Our train was on the right—no, the left—no, which was it? This doesn't look like it."

"This is ours," was the assuring reply. "Hop in! Yours would be the third hen coop from the other end. I know this car. Notice the little boy sitting at that window?"

"I guess you're right," replied Mr. Huckins, and he hopped in. Whereupon the Colonel grinned, retreated a few steps, and looked about anxiously. Then he jumped aboard the other train and began to walk rapidly toward his compartment. The train moved out of the station while the Colonel was still making his way over the valises and parcels which cluttered the corridor.

"It seemed a pity to do it, but it had to be done," Colonel Fenimore murmured to himself as he went. Then, at the end of the car, he heard two men talking in English. "How'dye do, gentlemen!" the Colonel greeted them. "Do you happen to know where that other train, that was in the station, is going to?"

"Barcelona, Spain," replied both the other men, at the same time.

"Bar——" A chill feeling suddenly struck Colonel Fenimore in the base of the spine. "Bar—ce—lona? Er—*this* train—we—are—on—where does *it* go, then?"

"Marseilles," was the prompt response.

"Good Lord!" cried the Colonel pitiably, as his knees began to shake under him. "That train I put Huckins on was our train, after all!"

CHAPTER V

FORTUNATELY, the passports for Glorietta and Freddie were expedited, so that the Colonel's pursuers, or rescue party, left New York on the Wednesday steamer. But there were four days of anxious waiting and hoping for Glorietta; and perhaps, to do Freddie full justice, he was no less concerned about his father's welfare than his sister. But Freddie's nature was buoyantly optimistic, and he had a natural disposition to fill all his moments with activity—if not productive, then unproductive. So it happened that Major Poulson's time was pretty much taken up with diverting Glorietta from her fears, while Freddie diverted himself. This arrangement suited the Major perfectly.

Toward the end of the restless wait, the Major had an idea. "I've been thinking, Glorietta," he said, "that, as soon as we arrive in Paris, we ought to send a telegram to the Chief of Police of Barcelona, asking him to find and hold your father. It certainly ought not be hard to find him. It might be more difficult to hold him. I don't know anything about Spanish law. But no doubt the police there can trump up some mild charge against a chap they want to hold."

Glorietta agreed with enthusiasm. "But why not send the cablegram now?" she countered. "Father already has a start on us."

"I considered that," replied the Major. "But, in the first place, if we should happen to be delayed, it might be

hard for them to hold your father that long, or they might not want to risk trouble by doing so; and the second difficulty is that, if I've been correctly informed about Spanish jails, it really wouldn't be doing the old gentleman much of a favour to keep him in one very long."

"That's true," Glorietta acknowledged, with a shudder. "But need they put him in a jail? Couldn't they let him stay in a hotel and prevent him from leaving?"

"It doesn't seem likely. On the whole, I'd wait till we arrive on the other side. And there's a bare chance, you know, that we may beat him across."

Even on the express steamer, the crossing was tantalizingly slow, for Glorietta. "And just think!" she said, with a touch of bitterness, to the Major, "ever since I was a little girl I've looked forward to going to Europe, and especially to the voyage on the Atlantic. And now that I'm here, I can't enjoy myself a bit."

"Really, Glorietta," said the Major philosophically, "you can't help your father by being miserable, you know. Hadn't we better get what fun there is aboard ship? It will make the time go quicker, won't it?"

"I've tried to," was the reply. "But I simply can't get Father off my mind. All the dreadful things that could happen to the poor dear Dad keep galloping through my head.—But I don't want to drag you into this, Major. It isn't fair. Just tuck me into my chair and run along and enjoy yourself."

"But I prefer to stay with you," said the Major. "With the assistance of a Scotch and soda now and then, I'd be delighted to tuck myself into a chair beside you and be gorgeously subdued and thoughtful."

The cloud cleared from Glorietta's eyes for a moment,

and a little gurgle of her former effervescing spirits came back. Her most engaging mouth trembled into a smile, and she held out her hand. "You're an ace, Major!" she murmured. "Really, you're a most comforting soul. I believe I feel better already. How stupid of me! Of course Father can take care of himself; and I'm certain they can't rob him of any money, because he surely hasn't any. Come, we'll go into the smokeroom and see what they're doing."

They linked arms and moved in the direction of the smokeroom. But, unobserved, the Major's mouth contracted into a hard line for a moment. He was wondering what the possibilities really were, when the blackguards who were operating the Spanish Prisoner swindle discovered that the Colonel had really arrived with a fine line of credit and conversation instead of the expected cash. "They might get nasty about it!" the Major thought. But he said nothing about his thoughts, and soon had Glorietta initiated into the deep mysteries of the smokeroom, where people of fifty nations were mingling with that queer informality and mellow understanding that exists nowhere else in the world.

Twice, during the passage, Major Poulson got news, from the wireless men, of the position of the *Synoptic*. But the weather was perfect, and there was no comfort in the news: the slower boat was making almost her schedule time.

Land's End was passed, then Griz Nez, with the dim outlines of Alderney in a Channel haze—then the landing in Cherbourg, the fast rattle toward Paris, St. Lazare, and the early evening entrance to a modest hotel in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. The stop in Paris was to be for a night only. On the afternoon of the following day, the little party was to go south on the very train, from the

Gare d'Orléans, that Colonel Fenimore himself had probably taken.

As soon as they arrived at the hotel, Major Poulson composed, with the assistance of Glorietta, a telegram which was dispatched to Barcelona. It asked the Chief of Police there to be on the watch for Colonel Fenimore and to take him into custody, for his own protection, until the arrival of his children. It read, finally:

JEFE DE POLICIA, Barcelona, Spain.

Please be on lookout for American, name Erskine Fenimore, large man wearing wide felt hat, usually dressed dark clothes, probably in or near Barcelona in relation to Spanish Prisoner swindle. His son and daughter coming to Barcelona at once, and will take charge and pay all necessary expenses. Please hold this man on some technicality until my arrival.

GLORIETTA FENIMORE.

"I believe that will be sufficient," said the Major. "They ought to know your father from that description. And I'm sure the Barcelona police have had experience with this sort of thing. In fact, I've been wondering if the danger isn't all ours instead of your father's."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm not sure I want to be present when your father is delivered into your hands, Glorietta. You see, he may not like being rescued, at all."

"I'll take all the responsibilities for that, Major."

Glorietta was already in a better state of mind. Somehow, it seemed to her that it was practically settled. Of course the Barcelona police would have no difficulty in apprehending her father. A man like the Colonel would be unmistakable. He would naturally go to a hotel, and unless his habits had undergone a radical change, it would be one of the best hotels. There really seemed little to do

but to go to Barcelona, visit the police, take the Colonel out of custody, pay the C.O.D. delivery charges and, after disillusioning her father about this Spanish Prisoner, snatch him back to Paris.

"For we *shall* come back to Paris, Major!" cried Glorietta, her face rosy with pleasurable expectation. "I've always wanted to live a while in Paris—and now that we're over here, we're not going back to the States without seeing everything."

"You said something then, Sis!" Freddie volunteered. "You hear a lot of touting about this burg being the Los Angeles of Europe. We'll find out whether it's got anything on Hollywood."

"I shouldn't expect too much of it, Freddie," cautioned the Major very seriously. "After all, there's no prohibition over here to make things lively. By the by, Glorietta, I've found out from the steamship office that your father's boat was just nine days from New York to Liverpool. So we're rather close on his heels, I should say. He could hardly have left Paris earlier than yesterday. Even if he stopped over nowhere, he can't be far away. It would be rather jolly to meet him on the same train, eh?"

Glorietta agreed that it would.

At three o'clock the next afternoon, the Major, Glorietta, and Freddie had already done a full day's sightseeing in Paris and were back at the hotel, packing up to leave. At four o'clock Glorietta asked the Major: "Have you seen Freddie?"

"I saw him half an hour ago. He may be in his room."

"No, he isn't in his room. And I've looked for him downstairs. Would you mind looking in the street for him, Major? I told him he must be ready to leave here a little after four."

The Major came back without Freddie. A full hour passed. Major Poulson walked up and down the lobby of the hotel, watch in hand, while Glorietta went from floor to floor in the hotel, with a page. Freddie was gone. At ten minutes to five the Major said: "We can't get the train now, Glorietta. We'd better book our rooms for another night before they're taken by somebody else.—The head porter says Freddie went out with a man, about three o'clock."

"But where do you suppose he can be all this time?" gasped Glorietta. "And what man could he have gone out with? Oh, why didn't we chain him to his bed or something? Just wait till he comes in!"

But Freddie did not come in; at least, not for some time. It was forty-eight hours before Freddie returned to the hotel, pale, dishevelled, and looking both indignant and bewildered. He happened to enter the hotel just as the Major and Glorietta were leaving it, for the tenth time since noon, to visit one more possible place of assistance.

"Ah, Freddie!" was the Major's mild greeting, accompanied by an assassinating glare. "You're late, aren't you? You were supposed to be here Tuesday."

"Don't speak to him, Major!" cried Glorietta. "We mustn't have a scene here! Freddie, you come upstairs!" Freddie followed, in lamblike silence.

"Freddie, how could you!" began Glorietta, after the door of her room had closed upon the three. "The Major was right when he said I should leave you at home! You've upset all our plans, and Major Poulson has been scouring the city looking for you. The police are looking for you. The American Minister is looking for you. Can't you understand that I'm almost dead with worry? Can't you——"

"Now, look, Sis!" burst out Freddie, in a grieved way, "you don't need to pan me like that before I tell you what happened. Don't you suppose I'm sorry I gave you so much trouble? D'ye think I meant to hold up the party? Why don't you show a little consideration for me? I've been in jail."

"Not in Paris," retorted the Major. "I've visited all the Paris jails, as well as the morgue and other logical resorts."

"I didn't say I'd been in jail in Paris, did I?" replied Freddie angrily. "I said I've been in jail, and I have. And a sweet jail it was, too. No water to wash in, no towels, no soap, but plenty of cockroaches. I tell you, Sis, if you knew what I've been through, you'd have a little sympathy for *me*."

"No towels!" echoed Major Poulson, with a fervent condolence which was not intended to sound sincere. "Great Scott, has it come to this? Are good Americans expected to take their own towels to jail with them when they come to Europe?"

"Sis, I'm not going to stand any more of that Englishman's sarcastic cracks!" shouted Freddie wildly. "Either you've got to get rid of him or I'm going home. You and I can get to Spain without any of his help."

"Glorietta, I don't want to thrust my services on you," said the Major seriously. "But if your young brother can't pass a jail without going in, you'll be a long time getting to Spain."

"I can't stand it! My head is bursting!" cried Glorietta, bursting into tears. "Oh, I wish you men hadn't come at all, either of you! I could have done better alone. I'm going on alone. Let me have my tickets, and I'll get the train this afternoon." Miss Fenimore threw herself down on the

couch and shook with scarcely audible sobs. She had hardly slept for two nights while Freddie was missing.

"Confound it, we're a couple of heartless duffers, Freddie!" said Major Poulson, going to Glorietta's side and taking one of her hands. "I'm awfully sorry, Glorietta, indeed I am. Please buck up and forget it. Freddie and I will go downstairs and have a drink and—ah—do a sort of armistice, and all that sort of thing, and you'll get some rest, which you need. There's no use trying to get the train, now, because it's already gone five. We'll have plenty of time to rest up and get to-morrow's afternoon express.—Come on, Freddie. Shake on it."

"I don't want to shake on it," said Freddie sourly. "But I'll join you in a drink, if you insist. Major, you get on a fellow's nerves something terrible. You may not mean anything by it, but——"

"Freddie, don't start that over again!" commanded Glorietta, suddenly sitting up and dabbing at her eyes with her handkerchief. "You two needn't go down and have a drink, either. If you want to drink, have it sent up here. The way I feel, I might join you. Freddie, you owe us an explanation—and I hope it's a good one."

"I was going to explain, but you both jumped on me without waiting to hear it. You don't suppose I broke into a jail just to annoy you, do you? Day before yesterday, just before we were going to start, I went out to get some cigarettes—you know, just around the corner——"

"You might have got them in the hotel."

"They didn't have any Dromedaries. I wanted some Dromedaries. I told that poor cheese of a waiter I wanted Dromedaries, and he brought me a bath towel. I tells him 'no' I don't want a bath towel, I want un package de Dromedaries cigarettes,' and he says, 'Ah, wee, wee!

Caporal.' I didn't want any Caporal, which you know yourself is those French cigarettes stuffed with shredded shoelaces, and I says, 'I don't want Caporal, you poor wet smack, I want un package de Dromedaries, and then he brings me Caporals, and I shoved him a few feet and went out to get 'em from that store on the corner. Well, my French wasn't so rotten, either, because I got the cigarettes I wanted, and had just come back to the hotel, and was passing in front of the head porter's desk, when I saw him talking with a man and then point at me and said, 'There he is now.' That is, I suppose that's what he said, and then the other man, who was a sort of an Italian or something, comes over to me and says, in pretty fair English, 'Are you Mr. Fenimore?' and I told him I was, and he says, 'Your father would like to see you. I am to take you to him.'"

"What?" cried both Glorietta and the Major, in a single voice. Glorietta added quickly: "Freddie, are you sure? This isn't the time to romance, Freddie! Are you sure——"

"Romance!" sniffed Freddie. "Is there anything romantic about landing in a French jail? Say, Sis, if you don't want to hear the rest of this——"

"Go on, Freddie. I won't interrupt you again. But tell me, quick, is Father in Paris? Have you seen him?"

"No, I haven't seen him. I don't believe he's here. But let me tell you.—I thought Dad was in Paris, of course, and I had visions for a few minutes that I was coming back to the hotel with him and surprise you. So I went to the corner with him, and there was a taxicab waiting there. I asked him how far we had to go, and he said, not far. So we got in, and the taxi driver began to turn the corners on two wheels. I don't know where we went or how we got there. It seemed like we had been riding for about two

hours, and I tried to get some information about Father out of this man, but all he would do was to shrug his shoulders and say, 'You shall see, very soon.' I could see that we were getting away from the city, and passing fields of vegetables and suburban houses, and I began to wonder how Dad got so far out in the country, when all at once we stopped in front of one of these French saloons, on a corner where two streets came in at a sharp angle. The man who had brought me along said to me, 'Wait here a little moment,' and got out.

"Well, I sat there and waited, and this fellow didn't show up. It began to get dark, and the chauffeur kept saying something to me which I couldn't understand, and I kept telling him to wait awhile, and pretty soon I got out and went into the saloon. There were a lot of tough-looking birds drinking, but I didn't see the man who brought me out there. And the woman behind the desk couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand anybody. So I went back to the taxi and told the driver to get me back to the hotel. Of course I knew we'd lost our train, but it wasn't my fault, was it? Well, I was pretty sore by this time, and when this taxi man made signs like he wouldn't ride me back unless I paid him for the whole trip right there and then, we had some conversation and he begun to double up his fists and wave them under my nose——"

"That's just for emphasis, in French, Freddie," suggested Major Poulson.

"Is it? Well, no frog waves his mitts under my nose and gets away with it!" said Freddie promptly. "When this one picks himself up and gets his parts assembled, he hollers like a circus barker and a crowd gets around, and a soldier with red pants and a sword and another soldier with blue pants and a coat without any sleeves comes up, and

I'm pinched. And say, these people won't listen to reason. I offered them their choice of any French currency I had in my pocketbook, but they wouldn't take it. They took it all away from me, later, and showed me a nice room for the night. It was a lovely little room, with a lot of odours in it. I told them I wanted to use the telephone, but they said I couldn't—and I guess they were right about that, because this noon, when they turned me loose, I tried to use it, and I couldn't make the dumb operator understand anything."

"But how did you get out? Did you get help?" asked Glorietta anxiously.

"I don't know how I got out. The first day, they didn't let me out, and to-day they pushed me out. They took me up before a little old man with a black cap and a full beard, and he asked me a number of questions, and I said, 'Wee, wee,' to everything, and then somebody who could speak what was thought to be English said, 'You will pay a fine of two hundred francs, as well as the taxi fare'—and I paid it, and here I am. Gee, I'm hungry! I bet if our government knew the way I was treated, there'd be a war or something!"

"You poor boy!" exclaimed Glorietta, forgetting her former resentment in the face of this recital, "we'll order something sent up for you right away. It's an outrage, Major! Just think of treating an American citizen that way! Something ought to be done about it."

"Well, I shouldn't want to appear unsympathetic," responded the Major, "but I suppose we really must consider the fact that the American citizen punched the Frenchman in the face for talking with his hands. The pity of it was that Freddie didn't realize how necessary it is for these people to have the free use of their arms in a dialogue.

—At the same time, Freddie, I'm really awfully sorry you've had such a messy experienee. I apologize for being so hasty with you. You were rather done in the eye, I should think. And, besides, I'm wondering just what it all means. Because it's plain enough that you were taken away from the hotel on a wild-goose chase, as part of a plan to delay our departure from Paris."

Glorietta nodded quickly. "There's no doubt about it," she said. "I thought of that while Freddie was talking."

"I hadn't thought of that, but it sounds right," said Freddie.

"But tell me just what *you* think about it, Major," went on Glorietta.

"It seems clear enough," was the answer. "Somebody in Barcelona didn't want us to leave Paris on the train day before yesterday. I don't imagine that any harm was intended toward Freddie. If they could get him far enough away from the hotel, they knew we wouldn't leave without him. This man simply took him out to wherever he went—where was it, by the by, Freddie?"

"I don't know yet," was the reply. "I tried to find out, but I couldn't."

"It isn't important.—I was saying, this chap got you out there and went into the pub by the front door and out by the back. He had done his part—and without anything illegal. He merely got you to go for a ride."

"But he told Freddie that he was going to take him to his father," insisted Glorietta. "How could the man possibly know that we were looking for Father?"

Sidney Poulson looked at the ceiling a moment; then, with what Glorietta always referred to as "your exasperating calmness," the Major took a cigarette from his case, tapped it, and lighted up, before replying. "I dare say we

told the whole tale in our telegram to the Chief of Police of Barcelona, didn't we?"

"But you don't mean that the Chief of Police is——"

"Not necessarily a partner in the Spanish Prisoner Swindle, Incorporated," replied the Major quickly. "Oh, no, not at all. But there are a good many eyes in a Spanish police station, and I've heard that those rascals have agents working for them in unexpected places. It wouldn't be surprising if they had an agent or two in police circles, as well as a handy man in Paris. It's clear enough that somebody wanted to delay us; and to break up our party was a simple method. Glorietta, don't let it disturb you too much. Your father is as safe in Spain as he would be in Los Angeles, I'm quite certain. Still, we ought to get that train this afternoon. I doubt if we'll be able to get places in the sleeping cars, now. Do you feel quite equal to sitting up in a compartment all night?"

"I'll ride in the baggage car, if necessary!" was the reply.

CHAPTER VI

THE five o'clock *rapide* from the Gare d'Orléans in Paris, to Barcelona, drops southward through Orleans to Limoges, thence through Montauban to Toulouse, and touches the bluest blue water in the world at Port Vendre. From here, the railroad begins to skirt the rocky coast of the Mediterranean, past little niches of vineyard, hung miraculously on steep bluffs; wheezing through tunnels bored in frowning rocks that lean down, like mischievous giants, to bar the traveller's progress; stopping now and then at little palm-shaded stations where it takes ten minutes to throw one bag of mail to the platform—until, at last, the red-eyed and sooty passengers stumble off upon a broad platform and prepare for the ordeal of going through the customs. This is the border station: Cerbère on the French side; and Port-Bou on the Spanish side.

There is no such thing as a "through" train from anywhere to Spain. By rail, you have your choice of entering the country by Hendaye–Irun, on the Biscayan shore, or by Cerbère–Port-Bou, on the Mediterranean side; but in either case the French rails exactly touch the border and stop. There may be many reasons for this, but one reason is sufficient. The gauge of the Spanish railways is almost a foot wider than that of the French.

At Cerbère there is barely time to pass through the customs and bundle into the *luxe* train which is waiting for you on the other side of the station. Never were engineers

and trainmen in such a hurry to depart from a station as at Port-Bou. They walk up and down the platform, consult watches, wave their arms, shrug their shoulders, and curse the slowness of travellers, until the last passenger has thrown the contents of his baggage back, jumped on his trunks to close them—and left the leg of a pair of pajamas sticking out from one end and a necktie wagging from the other—and has been boosted aboard by his porter. Thereupon the train snorts and begins to clear the station yard. From this point until the arrival in Barcelona the engineer and the trainmen cease to be in a hurry. They have only one idea, now; and that is, to arrive late. At times, the *luxe*, going down grade and around sharp curves, hits up a furious pace of twenty-five miles an hour. At that pace, owing to the peculiarity of the roadbed, valises fall out of the racks, flying umbrellas spear little children like so many salmon, and elderly ladies sag prostrate from their seats. But there are few fatalities, because the pace doesn't persist. In a few moments the *luxe* is making normal progress, which is, say, the speed of a North Carolina hookworm on his way to Virginia.

About nine o'clock one morning, when the sky was cloudless except for some filmy fleeces lazily drifting over Africa, two Americans and one British gentleman, tired and begrimed, left the *rapide* in Cerbère and began to enter Spain. This is not so easy as it looks. In spite of the charming courtesy of the Spanish border officials, they have deep-seated suspicions of strangers. The presumption is that all passports are forged and some passports more than others. Another presumption is that, if there is nothing dutiable in your trunk, you have probably concealed it under your skirt or waistcoat. All kodaks are under suspicion, not because Spain dislikes to be photographed,

but because the kodaks might not be kodaks at all, but little black boxes containing salt, matches, or other prohibited imports.

First of all, you pass through a wicket and leave your passport with a bright young man who pays no attention to it. Then, after you have been through the customs, or after the customs have been through you, the passport, properly stamped, is waiting for you, with a few hundred others, strewn like playing cards on a big table. The game which follows is called, "Find your passport," and is played by everybody on the train at the same time. If you like passports, there is nothing to prevent your acquiring three or four, all different. If you find your own, you give a peculiar exultant cry, known only to those who have played the game, and then run out the wrong door, and find yourself in France again. Then you have to convince the French officials that you are not a Portuguese sailor trying to wriggle into the country without permission. And all this time the *luxe* train for Barcelona is steamed up, and the trainmen are stamping up and down asking why they should have to wait like this for a lot of three-toed sloths.

One of the three Anglo-Saxons who got off the *rapide* that beautiful warm morning was a young woman who bore signs, under the train dust, that she would be extremely pretty when washed. Her name was Glorietta Fenimore. As she touched foot upon the platform, she said weakly: "If I only had a cup of coffee, it would brace me up. Don't tell me the French are civilized, Major! I know better. If they were civilized, they wouldn't leave people on a train until this time of day without a chance to get a bite of breakfast."

"I didn't say they were civilized, Glorietta," replied the

tall, erect man at her side—a man who needed only soap and water to belong to the white race again. "I didn't say the French were civilized. I merely said they were clever. You didn't see many of them on that train. Doesn't that prove it?"

"That's the most terrible trip I ever made. Couldn't we get just a cup of coffee before we do whatever we've got to do now?"

"I don't move my dogs till somebody brings me a whole ham and two loaves of bread," said the third of the party, a young man whose shirt had been white when he left Paris. There was a black bar straight across Freddie Fenimore's forehead, where he had leaned against a railing of some sort as the train lurched.

"I don't really think we'd better stop now," said the Major. "I think there's a buffet on the Spanish side, and perhaps there'll be time to get a bite after we pass the customs. If we miss that *luxe* train, there's only an omnibus, which doesn't reach Barcelona till three hours later."

"Lead on!" replied Glorietta wearily. "Come on, Freddie, the Major knows best. Where are my white gloves?"

"White gloves? You haven't had any white gloves since five o'clock yesterday," was the reply. "I've got some gloves here—in my pocket—no, I left them on the train. I'll go back and get them."

"Never! Not for a dozen pairs. Come quick! The Major is beckoning. Where are those passports?"

"You've got 'em."

"Nonsense. I gave them to you last night—oh, come on, the Major is waving them! How did he get them?—Freddie, my suitcase is gone! Have you seen it?"

"Seen it? I haven't seen my own since a guy with a rope

on his shoulder grabbed it. I told him to leave it alone, because I'd carry it myself. He said, 'See, senior,' and ran with it. A fine bunch of thieves . . ."

But, somehow, the little party from Los Angeles managed it. A porter mysteriously popped up, in the customs room, watching over their luggage like a hungry tiger; they played "Find your passport," and won; and there was even time to snatch a bowl of vile coffee in the buffet and eat a dry husk of bread before the train pulled out.

They found themselves in a clean compartment, on the *luxe*, and leaned back, exhausted, against the cushions. The new compartment was, at least, more roomy than the one they had quit. Even with the two other occupants, there was space enough. Both the Spaniards who faced them were viewing them curiously—but with a difference. A portly Catalan merchant was regarding them with that frank stare which is not considered impolite in Latin countries; whereas the other travelling companion, with a refined face and a slim, youthful, well-dressed elegance, averted his eyes delicately whenever they looked at him. There was something strangely appealing in the aspect of this young voyager. His hands were slim, beautifully shaped, and so clean and groomed in comparison with their own that even Freddie Fenimore stared at his hands disconsolately. He was clearly intelligent, and sympathetic toward these travel-stained Anglo-Saxons.

"He's frightfully good-looking, isn't he?" whispered Glorietta to the Major. "Why don't you strike up a conversation with him?"

"I believe he knows English," Sidney Poulson replied covertly. "If I'm not mistaken, that's the European edition of the *Daily Mail* on the seat beside him."

Glorietta reddened. "You don't suppose he heard what I said—understood, I mean?"

"What difference does it make? He may be a motion-picture star. He knows he isn't ugly, you may be sure."

A flush showed in the cheeks of the young man opposite. He did not smile, but the corners of his mouth twitched slightly. He looked out the window. But, not long afterward, he took up the newspaper which had lain beside him, and offered it to the Major, with a bow, saying in that too-precise English of one who has studied the language diligently but has not been trained in the idiom:

"Perhaps you would like very well to see this English newspaper, señor?"

"Thank you," was the rather cold reply. "Really, I'm too tired to read. Perhaps you'd like to see it, Glorietta?"

"Just the headlines," said the young woman. But she smiled at the young man, who bowed again and resumed his interest in the scenery outside.

"I say," continued Major Poulson suddenly, "could you recommend a hotel to us, in Barcelona? I haven't been there for a good many years, myself."

"Certainly, sir. You would wish a first-class hotel, would you not? Of the first class, there is the Ritz and the Colón. You will find them comfortable. You are Americans, are you not, please? Americans like great comfort and luxury."

"This young lady is American, also her brother. I am English."

"Ah?" The look of surprise was not lost on Glorietta. It meant, positively, that the young Spaniard had assumed that the Major was her husband.

Nothing more was said. The young Spaniard took a book from his pocket, and began to read. There was an air of

polite discretion in his every movement. Only once more, before the arrival at Barcelona, did the eyes of Glorietta and this exotic stranger meet; but in that instant the young woman felt, for the first time, that she was really in a foreign country, and skirting the fringe of the mysterious. For there lay in the eyes of the señor—those limpid black pools, Moorish and remote, tender but luminous—all the seductive, impetuous quality of which she had dreamed. The practical side of her tried valiantly to discount all this. Something whispered to her that the young man was probably brainless, vain, and domineering. But a little cool trickling made itself felt at her heart, and her shrewdness and common sense were trampled ruthlessly by a primitive feeling: "This man knows what love is!" And suddenly she remembered the cool, quizzical words of Major Poulson: "Marry me, Glorietta, and I'll go back to England." She glanced out of the corner of her eyes at the Major. He was wrapped in a fine, imperturbable British contemplation of the scenery.

At the Francia station in Barcelona, the young Spaniard bowed courteously and left them. Glorietta almost hoped that he would offer his services in getting them to the hotel; but it was evident that the young man was too discreet—that he perceived that Major Poulson was an experienced traveller and needed no help. So she saw him walk out of the station, swinging a little swagger bamboo, very erect—and without even a handbag. She wondered where the young Spaniard could have come from and why he had no luggage.

But, on their arrival at the Hôtel Colón, Glorietta had other things to think of. The first thing to do, after they had all emerged from the deep layer of train soot, was to find the police headquarters.

"I couldn't think even of unpacking before we find out whether they've got Father in charge," announced Glorietta firmly. "No, I don't even want to stop for luncheon. It really won't take very long to find out, will it?" Freddie felt the same way about it, in spite of his hunger, and the Major was no less anxious. The result was that, less than an hour after the arrival at the Colón, they were in a taxicab and on their way to the office of the police chief.

That dignitary, looking every inch soldierly and conscious of his remarkable black mustachios, greeted the three visitors with profound respect. It was plain, too, that he was relieved to find that Major Poulson could speak Spanish, even though it was not without its stumblings and haltings. For the benefit of Glorietta and Freddie, the Major translated the conversation as it proceeded.

"The telegram? Ah, yes, from Señorita Fenimore! We have received it promptly, and you may be sure we gave it our instant attention, señor. The Spanish Prisoner? Ha! Do we not know him well? We are blamed, a good deal, we Catalans, because unscrupulous men swindle people with this Spanish Prisoner story. I do not defend their practices, señor, but what can we do, so long as people are simple enough to believe such ridiculous nonsense? Only last week——"

"Please ask him if he found my father, Major!"

"Patience, Glorietta," replied the Major, with a warning glance. "One doesn't come to the point quickly in Spain. It isn't courteous. The Jefe is saving the good things for the end of the feast.—You were saying, your honour?"

"Only last week we had a Swiss gentleman here, to get this will-o'-the-wisp fortune of the Spanish Prisoner. Ah, no, it is not merely Americans who fall victim to the swindle. Would you believe it, this Swiss was warned by

us that the whole story was a fabrication, and we tried to get him to return to his own country and have nothing to do with it. And yet the simpleton left this very police station, and met these vagabonds, and was cheated of his money. Can you believe it? It is true, upon my honour."

"Won't you please ask him if my father is here?" said Glorietta.

"He will come to that. We mustn't try to work him too hard," responded the Major, shaking his head. "You were saying, señor?"

"Now, your method, señor, and that of the beautiful señorita, was intelligent in the extreme. Your telegram was well composed and perfectly understandable. When that telegram came into this office, I said to my assistants, 'There is good sense in this.' For you see, señor, I am a man of long experience in police work. I was formerly chief of the police of Palma, in Majorca, which, though it is not a great city like Barcelona, has its considerable problems, what with the mingling there of many races. If I may say so without appearing to boast, the local government has great confidence in me——"

"If he doesn't tell us whether Father is here, I shall explode, Major!" moaned Glorietta.

"I think he is approaching that point now," was the soothing reply. To the Jefe the Major said, "It is only necessary to look at you once, illustrious señor, to see that you are the very man for the place. No doubt your army experience, which has certainly been extensive, was a wonderful training for this very position. We had great confidence, when we sent that telegram from Paris, that it would be immediately successful, for we have heard of the excellent police system of your city. I do not wish to seem hasty, but the señorita, of course, is much concerned

about the fate of her father. You perhaps were able to locate him?"

"Certainly! With your telegram in hand, we had nothing but to lay hands upon him. By applying scientific methods, we plucked him from the train the moment he arrived in Barcelona. As he was evidently a man of refinement and wealth, we did not, of course, put him in a cell like a common criminal. No, certainly. We placed him in a well-guarded room, and permitted him to have, not jail fare, but whatever food and drink he wanted, sent in from a near-by restaurant."

"They have your father, Glorietta! He is in this very building, I believe," said the Major. "It was easy, after all. I felt sure you didn't need to worry."

"They have him? Here? Do you hear that, Freddie? Dad is here!" The tears of sheer joy glistened in Glorietta's eyes. "Can we see him now?"

"We have your father, señorita," went on the Jefe, addressing Glorietta in Spanish with an urbane smile, "and not a hair of his head has been harmed. Naturally, he denied his identity. That was childish, but they all do that. Naturally, also, we had to search him for possible weapons, and we also took charge of his valuables. It is rash for a man like him, not knowing the language, to come here with cash to the amount of thirty thousand American dollars——"

"What does he say, Major?" asked Glorietta.

"He says your father had thirty thousand dollars in cash in his pockets," said Major Poulson, blinking hard.

"Thirty thousand—what? Why, that—that's nonsense! Father had—thirty thousand dollars! I—I don't understand! Where could he get——"

"He may have met somebody on the boat and sold him

a partnership in Bellemary Development," suggested the Major drily. "At any rate, if the Jefe says he had thirty thousand dollars, he had. There's one thing which is internationally understood, and that's money."

Turning to the Chief, the Major then said: "Considering the young lady's mental agitation, illustrious señor, would it be possible for her to see her father soon?"

"Come with me!" was the reply. The Chief was highly pleased with the Major, with Glorietta, and particularly with himself. Like the very honest man that he was, he responded to the sentimental values of this little drama with spontaneous pleasure. "The room where your father is being held, señorita, is, to be sure, downstairs—but it is clean, and he is none the worse for his short detention. It is, in fact, a cell, if you wish to say so, but a large one suitable for a man of worth. I would not say to you that your father has enjoyed his experience. Certainly that would not be true. He has uttered loud outcries and has threatened the officers. One of our keepers has a slight knowledge of English, and reports that your father has threatened to write to the Prime Minister of the United States, and have a war declared. But that is natural. Nobody likes to be locked up, even though treated with consideration."

"Poor Dad!" thought Glorietta when this was translated to her as they went down the stairs to the lower story. "I'll just bet a cookie, Major, that he has used some terrible language. I don't know what he'll say to us."

"I fancy I know what he'll say to *me*," responded the Major dully,

They approached the place where Colonel Fenimore was incarcerated. It was not a cell, in the American sense, because they came to a great oaken door, with enormous

hinges, outside which, when they first glimpsed him, a uniformed man was sitting on a stool, rolling a cigarette. When the chief was observed, the guard jumped up and stood at lazy attention, but without ceasing to roll the cigarette.

"Open the door!" commanded the chief.

"Si, señor!" The guard took from his pocket an enormous key and inserted it in the lock. After what seemed to Glorietta an age of pushing and twisting and fumbling, the bolt shot back and the door swung open. It was half dark in the room, and at first they could see nothing. But, after the gloom lightened, the three visitors descried a man, sitting on the edge of a bunk, with his hands at his head. Then they saw him spring up and come toward them. "You low-down blankety blank dagoes!" the man shouted, "I'll get even with you for this! If my country don't blow this rotten bunch of onion-chewers off the face of the earth ——" The man suddenly made out the figure of the woman visitor, and stopped.

"Father!" cried Glorietta, but a little doubtfully. Her father's voice seemed changed.

At that instant the man inside the room came into the rift of light, caused by the open door. A big man with a shock of black hair and a twisted nose stood blinking before them. "Are you—are you Americans?" he cried. "For the love of Mike, help me get out of here! I'm Huckins—Henry Huckins of Iowa! Can't you make these dagoes understand——?"

"It isn't Father!" gasped Glorietta, seizing Major Poulson's arm. "They've arrested the wrong man."

CHAPTER VII

IN THAT agonized moment when he found himself on the wrong train, with the certain knowledge that Henry Huckins was at the same time speeding toward Barcelona, the suffering of Colonel Fenimore was acute. A more retiring and self-effacing man might have blamed himself for the predicament. But the Colonel was not possessed of those weaknesses of character. Consequently, he began to have a bitter feeling against Mr. Huckins and against the Midi Railway. Mr. Huckins was safe from the Colonel's ire, but the Midi Railway was noisily present, rattling along comfortably toward Marseilles.

The Colonel's first debate was conducted with a guard, who was seated on a stool in a little cubbyhole at the end of the car, smoking a home-made cigarette. This debate ended nowhere, because the guard did not understand the Colonel, and assumed that anyone he could not understand had nothing much of importance to say.

"I am on the wrong train, I tell you!" shouted the Colonel. "I want to go to Barcelona."

The guard smiled pleasantly. "Ah, *oui?* Barcelona? *Bien!*"

Mr. Fenimore caught the significance of "*bien.*" He cried indignantly: "No, it isn't *bien*, you fool! What's the first stop for this train?"

"Ah, *oui? Bien!*" was the reply.

At this point the conductor came along, looking for tickets, and prevented a small-sized massacre, in which a

humble servant of the Midi would have been the victim.

"Hah! Are you the conductor?" cried the Colonel, turning upon the new man.

"Tick-ket, *s'il vous plaît*, monsieur!"

"What is the next train for this—I mean the next stop for this train, captain?"

"Tick-ket, *s'il vous plaît*, monsieur," repeated the conductor, wearily. Then, to indicate what he meant, he showed a ticket from his own hand and pointed to the Colonel's pockets. "Tick-ket. Billet. *Comme-ci.*"

The Colonel dug up the little booklet that contained his ticket, and pointed at it. "Wrong train, see? Took wrong train! Want to go to Barcelona, Spain, see? Want to get off and take next train back. Get that, dummy?"

The ticket collector peered at the Colonel's booklet and pushed it back hastily. He shook his head fiercely and uttered chiding noises. He was trying to inform the Colonel that he was on the wrong train—a bit of information that the Colonel had just been trying to share with the ticket collector. When the Colonel did not understand him, the railroad man seized his cap, waved it twice, and jammed it on his head again. Then he walked six steps up the corridor, turned, stamped his foot, grew red in the face, and came back shouting. Thus it was plain that both he and the Colonel had the same general notion of making a fool understand—by speaking very fast and loudly.

"Now, here, don't get excited!" began the Colonel.

That was where the Colonel erred. He thought the conductor was excited. The French are not an excitable people, inwardly. They merely dramatize a situation so that it will be more readily understood by the hearer, who is presupposed to be mentally deficient. They do this by employing their hands, shoulders, and feet, in a frenzy of calis-

thenics, meanwhile being really as unemotional as a book-agent.

There seemed to be a strong opinion, on the part of the conductor, that the Colonel should pay a cash fare to Beziers, the first stop. To this end, the conductor went away several times, with a look of pain and exasperation, coming back each time to shake his hands under the American's nose. The last time he returned, the train stopped at Beziers and the Colonel got out.

"Ah, these Americans!" cried the conductor, and gave up the matter.

The Colonel ingeniously inserted himself into the next train which came into the station, from the opposite direction. After he had disposed his effects in the racks above his head, and was congratulating himself that he was going to have the compartment to himself, some men with long brushes and pails approached, and signified that the train was not going anywhere, but was going to be washed. Whereupon they proceeded to wash the Colonel out of his compartment with that careless, singing aplomb which distinguishes the French train cleaner.

The Colonel stood on the station platform for a few moments, in deep thought. He was miserable. Huckins was nearing Barcelona, and the great prize was disappearing in a clammy mist. The Spanish Prisoner's $300,000, the beautiful señorita, Freddie's future wife, the resuscitation of Bellemary Development—all crumbled into an ugly heap before his eyes. "Well, I guess it's a fizzle!" sighed the Colonel. "But, by the Lord Harry, I'm going to see this through. I'm going to Barcelona if I lose a leg!"

The next train for Narbonne was announced at six minutes past twenty. After a good deal of cogitation, the Colonel concluded that six minutes past twenty, in France,

must be six minutes past eight, P.M., in a Christian nation like the United States. So he waited in the station for that train, after devouring several sandwiches at the buffet, and presenting the blushing maiden behind the counter with her first chance, that day, to work off her accumulation of counterfeit money. Then, being fagged out, the Colonel went to sleep in the waiting room and awoke at thirteen minutes after twenty-one. The train for Narbonne had left, and the Colonel sought a hotel.

Next morning, about ten, Colonel Fenimore actually boarded a train for Narbonne, and rode to that station free of charge, in spite of the imprecations of the train crew, which gathered around him and implored, threatened, and wheedled. The Colonel was obdurate. He said that he would not pay a cent, not a cent. He would be eternally condemned to the lower regions, yes, sir, before he would pay a cent. Millions for defence, as Patrick Henry said, but not one cent for tribute. Why hadn't somebody prevented him from getting on the wrong train? Why didn't somebody speak English? He had a ticket for Barcelona, for which he had paid real money, and it was the duty of the French government to see that he got there.

"Ah, these Americans!" said the train crew, retiring from the conflict, one after the other. "They understand nothing. It is useless. It is throwing one good word after another. Let him ride." So the Colonel rode. He rode free, and felt the pride that comes to any man who has refused to be victimized by foreigners. He arrived in Barcelona, about eight o'clock that evening, somewhat more than a full day after he had intended. He was tired, soiled, and dispirited—far more so than he would have been had he known that Henry Huckins was already under arrest, by order of Glorietta.

CHAPTER VIII

THE Colonel had a number of motor 'buses, at the station, to choose from. He finally selected that of the Hôtel Colón, because the word was easy to pronounce. He registered on a slip of paper, with a round, flowing hand, and the clerk obligingly filled out the rest of the document, giving the requisite details concerning age, birthplace, sex, occupation, and probable next place of residence. Ah, yes, and nationality, of course. When the clerk asked the Colonel for his nationality, the latter replied that he was an American—but he stated the fact in a more subdued tone than usual. In truth, the Colonel was beginning to feel that the natives of Europe were not so impressed by the Fenimore Americanism as he himself was.

These registration slips, of the hotels, are collected every night by a police representative. Perhaps that explained why the advent of Colonel Fenimore, at the Colón, was so soon known to several persons who were expecting his arrival. At ten o'clock that night, the traveller was having a late supper, with a cold bottle of *cerveza*, in his room. He was comfortable for the first time since leaving Paris. He sat in his shirt sleeves and in his stockinged feet, eating soberly and thoughtfully, and viewing the clean excellence of the room furniture with approval. Suddenly there was a little rustling sound—so little as to be one of those noises that quickly arrest the attention. The Colonel looked toward the door and saw, very gently slipping in beneath it, an envelope.

"Huh! I'll bet it's an advertisement for some bank or department store!" chuckled the Colonel, recalling that in Los Angeles every visitor to the city is bombarded with such business missives within a few hours after his arrival. He rose and opened the door. The hallway was vacant. Then he stooped and picked up the envelope. It was addressed to "Don Erskine Fenimore."

"Don!" said the Colonel, to himself. "Where'd they get that?" He opened it and read:

Respected sir, I address you as a friend. I cannot make my name known to you, but I mean you well. For your good you should return to the United States, having nothing to do with the Spanish Prisoner. It is a plan to attrap you and wrest your money. You will be visited to-night or to-morrow by a man who assumes to be a priest, but who is a malefactor. Disincline to have business with him. If you doubt me, then please pay your respect to the police, who will correctly inform you upon this affairs. I can sign only Your Good Wisher.

"Now, what do you think of that?" gasped the Colonel. He darted to the door again, rushed out into the corridor, went to the end of the passage, and stared around. There was nobody in sight. He went slowly back and perused the note again.

The Colonel was undeniably upset by this missive. But, having nobody in Barcelona, to his knowledge, who should wish him well, it seemed rather that somebody was trying to mislead him upon the instant of his arrival. Who would wish to mislead him and prevent him from doing business with the priest-friend of the deceased Ramón de Santa Clara? Who but Huckins?

"Huckins!" muttered Colonel Fenimore, as this idea came to him. "Huckins is behind this. He's already doing business in this matter and doesn't want me butting in.

Of course, that's it! The letter looks like it was written by a foreigner—that's true—but Huckins could easy enough get somebody to write it for him."

The more the Colonel thought it over, the more apparent it became. Huckins had beat him to Barcelona, owing to that unlucky mistake at Narbonne, and had immediately begun negotiations with the priest. No doubt he was haggling over the percentage that he should receive, out of the Santa Clara estate. He needed time to drive a good bargain. Consequently, he had been on the watch for Colonel Fenimore's arrival and was trying to frighten him off the trail.

Really, it looked like the only explanation. And, as he considered this phase of the adventure, the Colonel's mouth almost watered. *If* Huckins had sent this note for such a purpose, then the Santa Clara estate was all that it was represented to be. It was big game. Huckins wouldn't take this trouble if he had found the thing to be a false scent. One hundred and twenty thousand dollars, and the guardianship of an heiress! It was a gold mine. But——

Even the sanguine nature of the Colonel drooped a little at the next consideration that came to him. Huckins probably had a pocketful of ready money. He had looked like it, anyway. Whereas, the Colonel—well, the Colonel had to confess that he had come a long distance on a bluff. Not exactly a bluff; no, not that—but on optimism, say. When the Colonel had received the first letter from the Spanish Prisoner, he had hopefully conceived the idea that, though he lacked cash, he could convince the Spaniards that he had something better to offer than cash—namely, stock in the Bellemary Development. The stock, truly, had no market value at the moment. But Bellemary was des-

tined to become the fastest growing garden city of the Pacific Coast. They ought to see that. The Colonel trusted to his power of argument—his salesmanship. Also, he had imagined, at that time, that the Spanish Prisoner's appeal had been sent only to him. He could not know that Huckins had received the same letter.

It began to look problematical. "But," concluded Colonel Fenimore, "Huckins won't freeze me out of the game with this sort of bunk! He may beat me, but he can't frighten me. No, sir!"

Even as the Colonel was considering, the telephone jingled. To the delight of the guest, it was a manageable telephone instrument, and the voice was dimly understandable. "A gentleman to see you, señor. Do you wish him to come up?"

"Sure. Send him up," was the reply.

A few minutes passed. Then there was a light knock on the door, and the Colonel, with a fast-beating and expectant heart, admitted the visitor.

"Señor Fenimore?" was the greeting, with a little bow. "Ah, thank you. I am Urbano Balmes. I am very glad to meet you."

"Sit down," invited the Colonel, and sat gazing upon the other man. It was the first time in Fenimore's life that he had ever been the host of a priest—for a priest this man seemed to be. He wore the garb of a Franciscan friar; though that meant nothing to the Colonel. He was olive-skinned, with flashing eyes, rather heavy and slow footed, and apparently a hearty feeder, for when he sat down, his *sotana* folded itself neatly over a plump, rounded hillock of flesh underneath. In the presence of this man of piety, Colonel Fenimore felt greatly impressed. He had not been

much used to dealing even with the Protestant clergy, except as prospects for real-estate lots. He waited for the visitor to conduct the conversation.

"You did not arrive when we expected you, Señor Fenimore," were the first words of the priest.

"I got off the train at Narbonne and got back on the wrong train," was the explanation.

"Ah, that is well accounted for. It must have been a disagreeable experience for you. You do not speak French —or Spanish, sir?"

"Not a d——" the Colonel saved himself just in time from offending the religious sensibilities of his visitor. He added, softly, "Not a d-definite word!"

"Ah, well, you are here. And a great errand of mercy remains to be done. Poor Don Ramón! I am sorry you should not have seen him, sir. He was a very good man. It was such a shamefulness that he reclined in prison. But that is over now—and he is beyond material—beyond material—pardon me, I speak English not so well. Some words I do not know."

"You speak it great!" said the Colonel.

"Ah, do not flatter me," said the priest, with a sultry smile. "But, to speak of Don Ramón. Nothing can be done for him, but yet much remains to be done. There is the beautiful Rosa."

"His daughter?" interrupted the Colonel eagerly.

"Yes, sir. Such a beautiful young woman. And so modest and helpless. You see, she was much sheltrated—if that is the word—I mean the roof was much over her head——"

"I understand you, all right. You mean she wasn't allowed to run around flapping——"

The priest looked surprised, but nodded. "That is it. By consequence, she is unused to the world. She needs a

kind, wise guardian. Ah, señor, it does me well to see that you are a respectable gentleman, of *madura* age, to whom such a helpless creature may cling for support. She is so innocent, señor. Ah, yes. The sort of young woman who bad men fix their eyes upon; for, though it is not for me to say such things"—here the visitor rolled his eyes piously—"I report only what is common speech when I say that her form is the likeness of perfection." Señor Balmes fixed his eyes keenly, from under the long grayish-black lashes, upon the face of the American. But the Colonel was guileless of the evil thoughts his delight might have indicated. He was thinking: "With her money, Freddie is a lucky young dog!"

Abruptly, the priest clapped his hands together, almost with an air of impatience, and said, in quick speech: "You have brought the necessary money with you, señor? Money, cash money, is necessary to pay the fees and smooth out the way for the recovering of the baggage effects of Don Ramón. In Spain, señor, public officials are poor, very badly paid, and they do not like to dine forever on potatoes. Much money is needed, to smooth the road. You have brought cash with you, as was expected?"

This was a facer for the Colonel. He had brought no money with him. He had brought certificates of stock in the Bellemary development, and he had brought hopes, and a persuasive manner, and a declamatory description of the fortune to be made in Southern California property. But of money he had a distinct need. He could sympathize with the Spanish officials who did not like "to dine forever on potatoes."

But Colonel Fenimore was not disposed to show his hand so early. He countered with a prompt and proud elevation of the head, and replied, with dignity, "I have

something as good as money, Mr. Balmes. I mean, your reverence. I mean—I don't know what to call you."

"Mr. Balmes, or Señor Balmes, or Father Balmes—anything you like." The priest was smiling again—that mysterious smile of his. A look of greedy satisfaction had come upon his face. I understand you, señor. You have travelling checks, or perhaps a letter of credit. Of course, that is as good as money, when negotiated. I do not inquire into your business. I see that you are a man of property. Merely, I must safeguard the fortune of the beautiful Rosa de Santa Clara."

"Sure thing, Mr. Balmes. I know that. Er—can I ask you a question?"

"A thousand, respected sir."

"Have you happened to see anything of a man named Huckins?"

"Huckins? Huckins?" The visitor's eyes became as orientally unreadable as those of a Chinaman. "It is a strange name. I have never heard of him."

"Oh, that's all right, then," said the Colonel, relieved. "I just thought you might know of him. No matter."

"In the matter of the money," went on Urbano Balmes, always steering the discourse back to the main point, "you must have cash before anything can be done. It will be necessary to have thirty thousand dollars of American money—as agreed. That should be either in American notes, or in pesetas. If you have the American money, the pesetas can be obtained. One third of the three hundred and sixty thousand dollars gold shall be yours, señor, according to agreement. That will leave not less than two hundred and forty thousands for the Señorita—a snug fortune. It is fair that she should also pay to you one half of the thirty thousand dollars you shall spend to re-

deem her father's baggage; leaving you a handsome profit, no?"

"I suppose you get a commission on this," remarked the practical minded Colonel.

Father Balmes drew back from the suggestion as though it tainted him. "I, señor? Ah, you must not say such things. What use have I for money? I am the spiritual adviser of the beautiful lady. I have known her ever since she was a *chiquita*—a little girl dressed all in white, like the snow which rests upon the Pyrenees, to take her first communion. Oh, so beautiful, then, señor, and so much more beautiful now. Her eyes are like those of the fawn, and in her fair cheeks there is a blush that rivals the sunrise over the hills of her native mountains. It is no wonder they call her 'The Rose of Aragon.'"

"The Rose of Aragon!" repeated Colonel Fenimore, with a relish. "That's a smacking pretty name! The Rose of Aragon. I shall be glad to make the lady's acquaintance." He bowed in his most gallant manner.

"Come, then!" said the priest, rising as briskly as his corpulence would permit. "You are a good man, señor, and you are fit to be the guardian of this angel. We must make haste then, for she is penniless to-day. She, an heiress, is penniless. You understand! No time must be lost. We must go to Teruel at once, you and I."

"Teruel?" repeated the Colonel. "Where is Teruel? I never heard of that place. I thought Mr. Santa Clara lived in a place called—what was it?—Ribas, or something similar."

"Ah, no!" was the reply. "The letters were sent to you from Ribas, of a certainty. But that was because it was not safe to send them from Teruel. The letters were smuggled from the prison, and sent by me from Ribas, where I

happened to be located. But Don Ramón died in Teruel, and there lives his poor Rosita, in poverty, with friends no richer than herself. Teruel is in Aragon, señor! It is not far. One takes the train to Murviedro, and there is another train at that point which stops at Teruel, on its way to Calatayud. We must go there at once. If you bring the cash, you will be rich in a few days—at least, in a few weeks, for the actual money of Don Ramón is in America. Yes, señor, rich in money, and rich in the *possession* of the Rose of Aragon." He uttered the word "possession" with almost a leer. "Can you go at once—in the morning? There is a train for Murviedro at eleven."

For an instant the Colonel hesitated. Somehow, now that he was face to face with the problem, his Bellemary stock did not seem so valuable. Nor did he feel so confident of his powers of salesmanship. Cash, hard cash, was the substance mentioned by the priest, who, when he uttered the word, and followed it with the Spanish *dinero*, tickled the palm of his hand, and wriggled his fingers meaningly. For that short instant the Colonel's better judgment told him to quit the affair and return to the United States as soon as he could. He felt homesick, and he felt uncertain.

But the gold that was glittering just beyond his reach, and the infinite charm that his imagination associated with the picture of the Rose of Aragon, together with his unquenchable optimism, turned the tide. "Who knows?" he told himself. "If I could have a chance to talk with these officials, in the American way of doing business, I could probably get them to let us have those trunks. As it stands, the trunks are no good to them; and I can make it mighty well worth their while. If they can see where their best interest lies, they'll do business with me."

"I'll be ready, all right," said the Colonel suddenly. "You'll come here to the hotel for me?"

"That is certain."

"All right! That's a bet, mister!—By the way, friend, I haven't had a chance to change any money into this Spanish currency yet. Could you——"

"Gladly, señor. I understand. It is fortunate that I happen to have a little money with me. Would a hundred pesetas accommodate you?" He took a wallet from beneath his *sotana* and extracted a banknote of that denomination.

"Thanks!" beamed the Colonel. "I'll get this back to you right away."

The priest waved a reassuring hand and bowed himself softly into the corridor, without realizing that he had joined the growing regiment of those to whom Colonel Erskine Fenimore was going to get back a small loan right away.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN the good Father Balmes left the Colón Hotel, he did not return to a religious house, but instead made his way down the Ramblas to a certain narrow street, where there was a coffee shop sandwiched in between two shuttered stores. Inside, in an obscure corner, a man still more corpulent than Señor Balmes, with grosser lips, and greedier eyes, and with far more spirit of initiative in his voice, was waiting. When he saw Balmes enter, he raised a fat forefinger and beckoned.

"Well, well!" was the impatient greeting. "Has he got the money? Did you see it?"

"I didn't see it, Don Juan," was the reply, "but it is certain he has it. He is undoubtedly a man of property, very imposing, very reasonable."

"Did he have a cat locked up?"

To have a cat locked up, in Juan Corcega's idiom, meant, "Did he smell a rat?"

"He is as innocent as a lamb," replied Balmes. "I think he is a great egotist. He puffs out his cheeks, thus, when he speaks."

"We shall puff his cheeks for him," said Corcega, with a mirthless laugh. "And will the gentleman go to Teruel?"

"He says he will go in the morning.—But what in the life of the devil, Don Juan, do we want in Teruel? Teruel, of all places! I have no love for that wilderness, where the wine is sour and the fare is lean. If you do not like Ribas, why not San Cugat, or some near-by place."

The bigger man's eyes became like two black beads. "Listen, Urbano," he said in a low tone. "Bend your head this way. We are being betrayed!"

"Betrayed!" Instinctively, the other man's right hand went toward his belt. "Who betrays us?"

"Aye, who? You have asked. Answer. You do not know that the Chief of Police of Barcelona—the idiot—has made his boast that he will stop our business?"

"It cannot be," breathed Urbano, with the injured air of a virtuous man whose little property has been illegally invaded.

"As for the Jefe, he is a fool and I do not fear him," went on Juan. "I know every word he speaks and every move he makes. This man Huckins, the other American, spent two days at the police station. That, I can understand. The daughter of the man Fenimore, with her brother and an Englishman, telegraphed from Paris that her father should be held, to keep him out of our clutches. The daughter did not know that the man Huckins also was coming, nor that her father would get his crazy carcass on the wrong train. Then, this ass of a Jefe seized Huckins, thinking he was Fenimore, before we have a chance to interview him. I understand that, also. We already have Huckins in tow. He will be the easiest goose we ever plucked, for he thinks he is the smartest man in the world. *They* make the fat roasts, Urbano, these wiseacres! Already, we have seen him, and told him that the Jefe is trying to get the Spanish Prisoner's money himself—and therefore warned him to clear out of the country. Ah, Urbano, there is nothing like greed to blind the eyes! If everything goes well, I shall make you rich, Urbano. But you are a silly-looking priest. You look more like a prosperous drayman. Did Fenimore suspect you?"

"He called me 'your reverence,'" chuckled Balmes.

"Well, he is a fool. Doubtless he is a heretic, who has never observed priests. Yet I wish you looked like a certain young man I had hoped to take into the business, Urbano. Ah, what a fellow! Handsome as Gutierrez, the Toledan bullfighter, but of a different sort, very gentle and refined! Dressed in a cassock, he would have been able to turn black into white. That youth, with his innocent eyes and a certain sadness about his mouth—he could make a fortune. And he is honest, Urbano! Hang it, you can't trust people nowadays. Sometimes I don't trust you!"

"And sometimes I don't trust you, Don Juan. I was going to speak of that last time when you said you would give me ten thousand pesetas—the time we fleeced the rich Swede—and instead——"

"No more of that!" muttered Corcega, between his teeth; at the same time, by some effort of sheer telepathic will, cowing the other man into a humble heap before him. "I have done better by you than you deserve!"

"By the life of the devil, you don't need to get so fierce," gulped Balmes humbly. "The matter is, Don Juan, you said we were being betrayed. What do you mean by that?"

"I am not certain, and yet—it must be so. The truth is, Urbano, we shall have to quit Barcelona for a while. This police chief, the simpleton, is honest. My man higher up can do nothing with him. He is going to make it hot for us here. I know this: that he has been in consultation with somebody, concerning us. He has twice driven to a certain house and spent several hours there. The worst of it is that I can't find out who it is that he talks with. But on the strength of these visits, he brags he will spoil our business, and even land us in prison ourselves. And times have changed, Urbano, we can't deny that. Hang it, these dainty

moralists are ruining everything. So we must go to Teruel. Once we are in that province, I have friends there who will look out for me. You must get Fenimore up there tomorrow; and I will attend to the man Huckins.—Ah, if I could only get that fine young man Cervello to join us, for this once! I would pay him—I would pay him——"

But Juan Corcega suddenly snapped his mouth shut. In the light of Urbano's humble protestation that his employer hadn't paid *him*, it seemed unwise to indulge in such a topic.

Many times Corcega had lavished these praises upon the fine young Cervello, in Urbano's hearing, and Balmes was getting exceedingly tired of it. He now murmured sullenly: "May the dogs eat your fine young man, Don Juan! If he is too proud to join us, let him starve! Besides, we are able to handle these matters well enough without him."

"*Vaya, vaya!* With Cervello, I could charm dollars from the pocket of the tax collector! You don't understand, Urbano. You are a rude fellow. So am I a rude fellow. But I am clever and you are a fool."

Balmes did not protest against the designation, but called for a cup of coffee and looked sleepy and resigned.

"I am going to look Cervello up in the morning," announced Corcega. "We may need him. I will make it worth his while. He may have changed his mind by this time. He came to me, starving, and was in the mood to join us. But that very afternoon somebody gave him a miserable job, enough to keep his soul near his body, and he turned me down. This time, I shall have him!"

"Curse him!" muttered Balmes in a very unpriestly way.

CHAPTER X

GLORIETTA FENIMORE was sitting at the window in the third story of the Colón, looking out upon the clouds of dust that were blowing down the Paseo de Gracia, and comparing them with that desert wind which is known in Los Angeles under the name of the "Santa Ana"—because it does not come from Santa Ana, and does not stop there, and is no worse there than it is elsewhere. "Windy Spain," she thought—and she correctly described it. Windy and dusty is Spain; windy and dusty, bare and stern, except where irrigation, or flowing streams, moisten the soil, and then it is brilliant and lush with verdure. But the moving picture below, in the Paseo, thrilled the American woman. Never had she seen such colour; never so many brilliant uniforms, from the crimson coats of the traffic policemen to the gorgeously parrotlike dress of the scores of officers and men who represented the branches of the army and navy. So many soldiers! It seemed that every other passer-by was either a soldier, a sailor, or a priest. And yet it appeared as natural and logical —this array of force—as the yellow-ochre tint of the houses which blended them softly into the background of the dusty hills.

Major Poulson and Freddie had gone to the American consulate, in the Fontanella, to see if Colonel Fenimore had been there. The Major and Glorietta's brother had been on better terms for the past few hours. Glorietta wondered

whether it might be, by chance, because she had resolutely refused to issue any more money to Freddie without knowing to a peseta just where it was bound for. At any rate, Freddie had become wonderfully polite to the Major, for some reason.

The telephone rang, and the operator, below, who could speak all languages with equal fluent rankness, announced Señor Arturo Cervello.

"Oh, I think you've made a mistake," said Glorietta to the operator. "I'm sure the call must be for somebody else."

"You are Señorita Fenimore?" came the answer.

"Yes, that is my name."

"Then the gentleman wishes it is you which he sees, please."

"Very well, I will come down to the parlour," said Glorietta, wondering greatly.

Don Arturo was seated in the parlour when Glorietta entered. He rose, as though he knew her at sight, and in the bad light of the room she could not make out his face at once. Then he stepped out into the ray which came through a window, and she caught her breath. Don Arturo was the very man who had sat opposite their little party in the *luxe* which brought them from Port-Bou.

"I beg your pardon, please, Miss Fenimore," began the visitor, "I have not interrupt you, I hope. You perhaps remember me? I hope you are very well."

"I am quite well, thank you," said Glorietta, and put out her hand frankly. Instead of shaking her hand, the young man let it rest on the tips of his fingers, and leaned over to press his lips upon it, very lightly.

"I—I am glad to see you. I—I hope you are well, too."

It sounded exceedingly stupid in her own ears; but unconsciously she was merely saying the politely formal thing that any Spaniard would expect.

If Don Arturo had not studied English to some effect, and learned that the Anglo-Saxons do not do such things, he would have inquired fervently for the health of her father, her brother, and might have said, "live you many years," and so steered the conversation that it would be at least fifteen minutes before anything to the point could be said. But instead, he stood expectantly waiting to be asked to be seated. "Oh, please sit down, Mr. — er——"

"Cervello, please."

"Mr. Cervello. I like that name," said the American bluntly.

One compliment deserves another—or gets it whether it deserves it or not—in Spain. "I think the name Fenimore is very nice," replied Arturo. Meanwhile, Glorietta had a chance to "size up" the visitor, as she would have said. Without an impolite inspection she saw, with some astonishment, that while at first glance he seemed to be the very essence of good tailoring, a better view revealed the fact that he was merely well pressed and brushed. She wondered whether she had somehow missed that fact when she saw him on the train. Then she nearly blushed, as she recalled that she must have dedicated most of her attention, at that time, to his face. "He's really quite poor!" she told herself. "But he knows how to make the best of his shabbiness."

"You will excuse me if I do not speak English so well? I have spoken it not long."

"You speak well enough for anybody."

"*Gracias.* Then you will forgive me if I come to brass

nails at once—is that not your expression? Yes. Then I wish to speak to you about your father."

"My father!" gasped Glorietta excitedly. "Do you know where he is? Yes, yes, please tell me anything you know about him."

"Your father has been in Barcelona but has gone to Teruel, señorita."

"To Teruel. Where is that? When was he here? Did you see him? Has he—— Oh, forgive me, Mr. Cervello. I didn't mean to ask so many questions at once. But I am worried about him. Just tell me anything you know, please, and I shall be grateful."

"I have not seen your father, but I know that he has been here. Teruel, señorita, is a province many leagues from here. It is not easy to reach. The trains are not many, and very slow. Our trains in Spain do not run so fast as yours, I think."

"Would you think it very rude if I should ask you how you know these things?" asked Glorietta suddenly.

"Rude?" Cervello repeated the word. It was a word he did not know. He looked puzzled. Then his eyes lighted up and he smiled. "I understand, I think. It is natural question, señorita, but will you forgive me if I answer that I do not like to say. That is not like a Spaniard to make such answer, señorita. It comes very hard for me to say such. We Spaniards would rather say what is not so—make up a story, I could say—rather than to be—what you say?—*rude?*"

"Mr. Cervello," said Glorietta very firmly and explicitly—because, somehow, in the presence of this young man she found need to be firm and explicit—"I *don't* want to be rude, but I can't help thinking that it wasn't an

accident that you were on the train with us the other day. I *do* thank you for taking an interest in my father, but I *do* think I ought to know just why you should be interested in him."

A crimson flame shot across the dark cheeks and the forehead. Cervello's mouth compressed tightly, and she saw his hands tremble a little. But he mastered himself with an effort and stammered:

"It—it—it is a matter for—for—I do not remember the word—yes, for *trust!* Señorita, I cannot tell you. But—do you think I—I am honourable? Can you not trust me? I promise you I mean you no harm."

Glorietta gazed full into his face. Then she nodded definitely. "I do trust you. Yes, you are a man of honour. At least, I think so. But—it is so strange. You have not seen my father, and yet you know he has been here. Do you know why he came to Barcelona?"

"Yes, señorita, I think so."

"Do you know anything about this silly Spanish Prisoner which my father came here about?"

Don Arturo swallowed hard. "Yes, señorita, I think I do."

It seemed useless to press the visitor further. Something about him inspired confidence in Glorietta, and yet there was a good deal of doubt in her mind. She tried another aspect: "If my father has gone to Teruel, then of course we must go there. He knows nothing about the country and doesn't speak the language. Tell me truly, Mr. Cervello, is it the sort of place where—where——"

"Pardon me, I know what you are thinking, señorita. Spain is a very peaceful country. I assure you of it. You will see for yourself. We try to be courteous and kind to strangers. It is true, we are not always so kind to each

other. There are bad men in Spain, señorita, as it is everywhere so, but you need not be afraid for your father. And ladies are safe everywhere. Still, in places like Teruel, travel for ladies is not comfortable, and I make you advice that you should stay in Barcelona, which is very modern, and you cannot have any fear that your father will come back here, very safe. I come only to see you to say that your father had gone to Teruel, so that you cannot worry."

"I shall go to Teruel," objected Glorietta promptly.

Don Arturo shook his head but did not argue the point. He rose and bowed deeply over her hand, and then walked away erect and with a swinging, youthful stride. He left Glorietta with a curious thwarted feeling, tinged with an apprehension she did not like to confess. Also, she had to admit that, though Don Arturo was far from aggressive, he had managed to dominate the situation with his refined composure and his old-world grace.

"What in the world is he up to, I'd like to know?" Glorietta asked herself. "It doesn't seem possible that he is anything but straight; but why shouldn't he be able to say how he comes to be concerned in this?" And then, straightway, she re-created the little interview, in her mind's eye, and gave up herself to the drowsy, almost narcotic pleasure of imagining his presence. About him there were no angularities, none of those unintentional jarring qualities of the men she had known. He was not effeminate in the least, yet there was something about Cervello that reminded her of the understanding, soothing companionship of a rare woman friend. He had not uttered a word that could be construed as devotion to her; yet whenever he had looked at her, she felt that she was being adored. "Drat 'em, I suppose all these Spaniards and Italians are that way!" mused Glorietta. "They have nothing else in

the world to do but try to make love!" Yet, in another instant, she replied to herself: "No, that's not fair to Arturo. There's something about him which is really splendid and even noble.—But I don't see why he couldn't tell me how he knows about Father. At any rate—he'll come back!"

The Major and Freddie came in, both looking frustrated and rather gloomy. The Major shook his head before Glorietta had a chance to ask the expected question.

"No trace of him at the consulate," he announced. "I went to the British consulate, too, on a chance—but they haven't seen him."

"He has left Barcelona. He has gone to a place called—what was it?—Teruel."

"Teruel? Oh, no! Are you sure it is Teruel? Why, Teruel—let's see, that's some awful, dismal backwash place up in the mountains where the Tagus rises, I think. Yes, I remember being in Cuenca, once, with another chap, riding through that part of Spain. Gad, there are places where there aren't even cart roads! How do you know he has gone away from here?"

Glorietta recounted the interview with Arturo Cervello —as much as she chose to tell of it.

"I don't like that youth!" was the Major's first comment.

She found herself defending him at once. "Oh, I'm sure he is perfectly sincere and decent, Of course——"

"Why didn't he say how he happened to know about Dad, then?" asked Freddie.

"That's the point," nodded the Major.

"I don't know." Then Glorietta added: "I don't know why in the world I let him get away before you came back. You might have been able to get more information from him, Major."

"Glorietta," said the Major, after a pause, "I wish you had held him here. That chap isn't spending his time running after you and your father, for no reason. He couldn't know about your father unless he was connected with the Spanish Prisoner gang in some way. And why should we believe that he is telling the truth when he says your father has gone to Teruel? It's decidedly more likely that we're being thrown off the scent again, isn't it? I'd rather trust to the Chief of Police. He was a terrible dud to begin with, but I think he's absolutely honest. He's going to ring me if he finds out any news of your father."

At dinner, a page called Major Poulson to the telephone. When he returned to the table, he looked more than usually animated, and puzzled.

"It was the Jefe," he said. "Glorietta, that young chap told you the truth! Your father has been here and has gone to Teruel."

CHAPTER XI

HAVING entered Spain on a *luxe* train, the Fenimore party was now to discover, on its way to Teruel, something about the slower means of communication. The Spanish "omnibus," being probably the slowest thing that travels upon steel rails, represents the very soul of the Iberian peninsula. In Spain, one regards travel, by any method, as a hardship; not to be growled about, not to make one fret and fume and wish one hadn't come; but a dire necessity to be endured with heroic stoicism. So, when the Spaniards leave home for a rail journey, they bid all comforts a sad farewell, salute their friends like gladiators going to the arena, lay in a stock of provisions, and get to the station about two hours before the train is due, which is three hours or so before it leaves.

Even the well-travelled Major Poulson had something to learn about Spanish rail travel, that day the little party left Barcelona for the interior. Having chosen a window seat for himself, in a compartment, and another opposite for Glorietta, the Major confidently deposited their bags in the seats, and then led Glorietta back into the station for a last snack before leaving. This would have been perfectly all right in England or in the United States. The Anglo-Saxon regards a bag or parcel in a train seat as being the visible first mortgage of some absent owner. But not so in Spain. The rule of findings-is-keepings applies absolutely. If you discover a bag in a seat and you desire the seat, you throw the bag on the floor and seize the seat. Thus, when

the Major and Glorietta returned, just before starting time, there were two sombre natives installed in their chosen places, already curled up in their cloaks and defying eviction.

"I say, those are *our* seats," said Major Poulson politely.

If the Major had said that the train was his, or the province of Barcelona was his, or that he was the sole owner of the Municipal Theatre, he would have produced just as much effect. The two Spaniards curled up tighter in their seats, smiled sadly, nodded, and closed their eyes.

"I say, those are *our* seats, you know," insisted the Major, translating the idiom into his best Spanish. "We got here first and put our bags in them to hold them."

The present owners of the seats grew tighter and stuck like cockleburs. "I could throw them out, Glorietta," said the Major, "but in that case there might be a deuce of a row, and we really want to get to Teruel. I suppose we'll have to take seats on the corridor side."

"Oh, it really doesn't make any difference," was Glorietta's decision.

But while they were speaking, a stout lady, with an enormous parcel which might have contained all her worldly possessions, had entered and taken one of the two remaining seats.

"You'd better take this one, quick!" said the Major. "I'll reconnoitre." He did so, and found only one seat left; so that, as it fell out, the three members of the party found themselves in three different compartments. To the Major's surprise, he found that Freddie, either by intuition or sheer luck, had captured a window seat by the Spanish method of throwing somebody's bag into the corridor. Freddie was well installed. He sat facing a large and motherly lady, whose chins numbered three—with a

budding fourth—and whose upper lip encouraged that slight moustache so common among aging matrons in Europe. This lady was already viewing Freddie with a certain protective approval, as though, in the goodness of her heart, she intended to see that he got to his destination safely.

"I'm all set!" announced Freddie to the Major, upon inquiry. "How are you and Sis?"

"Separated," was the gloomy response. "Hadn't you better let your sister have that window seat, Freddie?" Freddie was willing, but Glorietta wouldn't move. She said she was already dug in, and would remain in her trench. So the train pulled out, at last, and began its moderate journey down the coast toward Murviedro.

Left with a good deal of time on his hands, Freddie looked around at his companions. All the Spanish beauties of which Freddie had heard were absent from his compartment. Besides the stout matron opposite, there was another ample lady with cross-eyes, who was already at work sewing buttons on a pair of spare trousers belonging to her husband, seated next to Freddie. The husband looked like a brigand, but was probably an honest peasant from the Valencia district. The other four travellers were nondescript, gloomy, and talked in monosyllables. Freddie looked helplessly out the window and tried to recall where he had heard of Spanish vivacity—the sort that trills an endless stream of sparkling conversation to the accompaniment of the guitar and the castanet. There were no guitars visible in this compartment, though, if Freddie could trust his nose, there was a fair supply of onions and sausage.

The effect of the onions and sausage, after a couple of hours, was to make Freddie Fenimore hungry. He had omitted to lay in a supply of provisions, as had also the

Major and Glorietta. They all depended upon some probable dining car, or at least some wayside buffet. This was an error that arose from their ignorance. The omnibuses are not so gifted, in Spain, nor are the railroad stations.

Freddie became much hungrier when the passengers began to untie, with great and reverent deliberation, sundry parcels which looked as though they contained food—and did. There were sausages, eggs, cheese, hunks of bread, and even pieces of cold meat. There were bottles of wine, which gurgled noisily as it was drunk from the source. Suddenly Freddie's stomach, in the midst of all this food, began to sink. It did not sink slowly, like a bit of waterlogged wood. It went down with the eccentric motions of an elevator operated by a green hand. In spite of all he could do, Freddie found himself following the course of each bit of sausage from the parcel to the mouth; and his throat was parched.

After a few moments of this, it became apparent to the rest of the passengers that the young stranger was watching their dining. In such a case, politeness in Spain demands that one offer one's lunch to a stranger. The diners were already offering each other sausage, eggs, and wine, though in each case the offer was courteously declined. Thereupon the offerer insisted; whereupon the refusal became more courteous. This went on until it wore itself out.

When the gentleman whose extra trousers had been displayed unloaded from a parcel the simple but fragrant luncheon that he had brought along, he offered it to Freddie. It is not polite to offer any part of a Spanish lunch, at first. Courtesy demands that one offer it all. "Please take my lunch!" said the Spaniard to Freddie, holding it forth tantalizingly.

Of course, Freddie should have shaken his head and replied: "I thank you a thousand times, señor. Your good-

ness is irresistible. It is what I should expect from a caballero of your aspect. Sorrowfully, I decline. Will you, in turn, accept this cravat which I am wearing? Or, perhaps, my raincoat?"

Thereupon the other man would smile graciously and say: "No, señor, many thanks. Your courtesy is sublime, but I cannot at this moment accept articles of such enormous beauty and value. You will, however, make my heart proud by accepting my lunch." And so on. Between two natives of Spain this would be good for a conversation from Barcelona to Tarragona. And at the end, the man with the lunch would have eaten his lunch and the man with the cravat would still be wearing it.

But Freddie, almost emaciated, knew nothing of the polite form of giveless giving. When the man offered Freddie his lunch, Freddie took it. He took it eagerly, and said, "Much obliged. I *am* hungry. I'll do as much for you some time. This is a life saver."

The Spaniard did not understand what Freddie said, but he saw that Freddie had taken his lunch. It was not only his lunch, but it was his wife's, too. A man can give away his own lunch and survive, but to give away one's wife's lunch to a stranger is in a different category. Instinctively, the Spaniard reached out to take his family food back again. Freddie, perhaps thinking that the other man had much more food stowed away on the racks, instinctively began to eat what was before him.

"Blood of blood, the young man has taken it!" cried the peasant to his wife in rage. "He is eating it, already. Tell him to give it back."

"Tell him yourself, stupid!" said the lady. "He can understand me no better than you. See him eating that

ham! And the ham was for me, who cannot digest sausage well."

"Is there nobody here who can speak this stranger's language?" cried the peasant wildly. "Tell him I offered it for courtesy! He is a barbarian. He knows not politeness. Can nobody stop the glutton? There goes another egg!"

Then the stout lady opposite Freddie leaned forward and whispered: "You really shouldn't eat their food. It was but politeness. Return it to them, and I will share mine with you." She spoke English brokenly but effectively.

"Why did he offer it if he didn't mean it, then?" asked Freddie. "I'm sorry, but he held it out to me."

"Try some of mine, please," said the lady, taking the remains of the other lunch from Freddie and handing it to the owners, with an explanation that didn't appease their wrath. "It is on the rack above my head, if you will fetch it down."

"Eat as much as you care for, for I am not feeling very well," went on the stout matron, after a pause. "You are surprised, are you not, that I can speak your language a little? I have been in your country, many years ago, with my husband. We like Americans very much. We were very well treated by them, so it is not strange. Yes, we were in the United States, and also in Mexico, and my husband, having made much money, became homesick and returned to Spain; but now, oftentimes, he wishes himself back. At home, we have a little silk American flag, which we always keep. Ah, we like Americans!"

"It sounds good to me, ma'am," replied Freddie, tucking a sandwich away. "I wouldn't have thought you could talk anything but Spain. I'm sorry you don't feel well, though."

"Ah, it is only travelling sickness. It is a terrible head-

ache I always have on the cars," said Doña Fernandez, after they had exchanged names. "It is as if my head would burst."

"Well, I've got some aspirin with me," was the prompt reply. Freddie went into a waistcoat pocket and brought forth a small envelope. "Here, ma'am, take two of these. They're fine for a headache."

The lady looked at the tablets doubtfully. "I never heard of it. Are you sure it is good?"

"Great for a headache," replied Freddie, with a medico-legal poise. "Just wash them down with a drink of water. I'll get you some."

Doña Fernandez beamed upon the young man. He pleased her. Freddie did not know it, but the Doña had always longed for a man child, whereas her lot was to be content with one daughter. She swallowed the tablets without protest and drank the water. Then she sighed, leaned back in her seat, and closed her eyes.

Freddie waited for some time for the conversation to be renewed, but the lady's eyes did not open. The young man gazed thoughtfully upon her ample figure and said to himself: "Gee, I never knew aspirin to put anybody to sleep so quick. I wonder if one tablet would have been enough for her. I wonder——"

Suddenly the perspiration stood out on Freddie Fenimore's forehead, and he shook with terror. He rammed his fingers down in one vest pocket and fished out the envelope of aspirin tablets. Then he brought up from another pocket an envelope containing more tablets. The second tablets were permanganate of potash, which Freddie had brought along (not knowing what kind of poisonous reptiles or insects might abound in Spain) to be duly precautionary. Freddie, though extremely reckless in some respects, had

an almost neurasthenic fear of bites and germs, the result of his common-school education, which abounds in information on harmful bacteria and vitamins.

"Oh, my good Lord!" gasped Freddie. "Which one of those envelopes did I take the tablets from? The lady hadn't ought to have fallen asleep so quick as all that! And she doesn't seem to be breathing!"

Panic-stricken, Freddie watched the ample bosom for signs of breathing. He couldn't discern any. Somehow the Doña's face seemed to be extraordinarily white. Freddie looked around at the other passengers, who had been hugely edified by Freddie's administration of the tablets, but who were now somnolent again. Then he reached over gently and touched the Doña's hand. Cold! Icy cold!

Frantically, Freddie counted the tablets in one envelope, and then counted the others. But he couldn't recall how many he had of each. There were seven in one and nine in the other. He could remember using one of the permanganate tablets after cutting himself with his razor. He thought he had started with an even dozen. He could recall taking an aspirin tablet or two. But as he had emptied these from a large bottle into the envelope without counting them, this examination got him nowhere.

"She's dead. I've poisoned her!" trembled Freddie. "My goodness, what shall I do?"

Again Freddie gazed upon the lifeless body before him. This time there were clear signs of suspension of animation. One of the chubby fingers, which bore a large signet ring, seemed to have shrunk, so that the ring could almost have dropped off. It occurred to Freddie that he had heard somewhere that this always happened when life ceased. Freddie tried to rise from his seat. His legs bowed under

him. He made a great effort, dragged himself across the parade of feet that separated him from the doorway, and lunged into the corridor.

Major Poulson, sitting awkwardly in his seat in the adjoining compartment, trying to read, was surprised when somebody seized him by the arm, and he looked up into Freddie Fenimore's bleached face. "C-Come out here, quick, Major!" The Major scrambled out into the corridor. "S-something terrible has happened. You got to help me, Major. It wasn't my fault. I thought I was doing the right thing."

"You've made arrangements to fight a duel!" suggested Major Poulson. "Or have you uncoupled the car behind?"

"Nothing like that. I've poisoned a Spanish lady by mistake," chattered Freddie.

"Poisoned a Spanish lady—by mistake? Oh, you can't do that, you know. You can't poison a lady by mistake. You've got to premeditate it. You could have poisoned yourself by mistake. But not a lady. Particularly not a Spanish lady."

"I gave her some poison tablets—permanganate of potash—by mistake, I tell you."

"But what had she done to you, Freddie? It's hard enough to talk with a Spanish lady, to say nothing of getting intimate enough to poison one."

"She had a headache, and I thought I was giving her aspirin. And now there's no sign of life in her. She isn't breathing."

"No, she wouldn't be, of course, if you poisoned her sufficiently. Egad, Freddie, if you only knew how this will upset our plans! I don't know how they regard a thing of this sort in Spain, but in England it would make no end of trouble."

"Don't stand there yapping like a traffic cop, Major! Do something, will you, please?"

"But I can't do anything, Freddie. I'm not an undertaker, you know. Let me think! Hold your horses till I have a chance to consider this. It isn't usual—you'll admit that. Let me see! You're quite sure there's no sign of life in her? You did a clean job of it? That's bad. But it has its advantages, I suppose. She won't be able to testify against you in court. I suppose we'd better tell your sister first and get her view. Glorietta is practical. But it's bound to upset her, too. Come on; the lady you poisoned can wait till we talk it over."

Freddie permitted himself to be hauled to the door of Glorietta's compartment. Glorietta was sitting gazing upon the slowly moving scenery outside when the Major reached in and touched her. He beckoned the young woman to come outside. Glorietta, seeing Freddie pale and trembling, sprang up so quickly that she upset a bottle of wine her neighbour had balanced on the window sill, and it fell into the gentleman's boots, which he had taken off for comfort, and began to gurgle its contents cheerily into its new receptacles.

"I'm awfully sorry, sir.—Freddie, what is the trouble?"

"The trouble is, Glorietta," explained the Major, "that Freddie has become acquainted with a Spanish lady and assassinated her. That sort of thing is all wrong, and Freddie is sorry, but the lady is dead. The question is, what shall we do?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Major. I don't see the joke, if there is one. Freddie, what has happened?"

"He wants to make it as bad as possible, but that's about the truth, Sis. I got to talking with this old lady, and she had a headache, and I gave her what I thought was

aspirin. I—I'm afraid it was some poison I was carrying with me, some antiseptic tablets, you know—some of those—— Oh, I'm going to jump off the train! You people can go on without me. I don't want to drag you into this. The Major is right—I don't use my head. I'm always pulling some crazy stunt. But I thought I was helping the lady. This train isn't going fast. I'll hop off."

"Wait!" ordered the Major, seizing Freddie's arm and adopting an attitude of compassion; for Poulson's heart was big, and the plight of the young man appealed to him. "Don't be an idiot, Freddie. We'll stand by you, whatever happens. Come, now, just think back a bit—did anybody see you give those tablets to the lady? There's an idea! Old ladies do have a way of dropping off suddenly, you know. Come, now, did anybody see you?"

"Everybody in the compartment," groaned Freddie.

"Gad, there goes a good idea flat!" was the Major's comment. "Freddie, I don't want to hector you. I sympathize with you. I'll help you. But why in the name of Jones do you want to poison ladies before witnesses? If you had taken her out in the corridor——"

"Oh, don't, Major! Don't be cruel! Freddie is on the point of collapse," pleaded Glorietta.

"Cruel? Is that cruel? Dash it, I didn't mean to be cruel. I'm sorry, Freddie. Here's my hand. Don't get excited. Don't do anything rash. I'll see you through this. Let me see. It calls for thinking. Dash it, it's difficult to think when you're put to it, like this. Glorietta, you're a quick thinker. What do you say? Shall we all get off at the next station and hire an automobile, or something, until after the Spanish lady is buried? Then we'll go on to Teruel and claim we've just walked in from Madrid. We'll buy haversacks and walking boots and staffs——"

"Will you let me say something, Major?" interrupted Glorietta. "Or do you glory in your idiocy?"

"I *want* you to say something! Freddie, be quiet!" The Major became deeply attentive.

"What was the kind of poison you had, Freddie? Tell me surely. Don't make any mistake."

"Per-perman-manganate of p-p-p-potash!"

"She couldn't take that without being in pain. It would burn her stomach. Taken straight, she'd know she swallowed something."

"She didn't seem to be in any pain. She just fell asleep," replied Freddie.

"Then you didn't give her the potash. You must——"

"Did you have any other poison with you?" asked the Major, with growing relief. "Try to remember all the poisons you carry, Freddie. Was there——"

"Will you be quiet, Major?" insisted Glorietta. "If you didn't give her the potash, then you gave her the aspirin. Where is this female, Freddie? Is she young? Oh, no, you said she was old. I'll go and look at her. I don't believe the aspirin could do her any harm, if you gave her only two. Still, if she had a weak heart——"

"Oh, Lord, you've spoiled it, Glorietta," said the Major. "I was beginning to breathe again. But—aspirin—weak heart—I've heard of that——"

"Which compartment, Freddie?" asked Glorietta, brushing the men aside.

Freddie indicated. Glorietta disappeared within Freddie's door and was invisible for some moments. Then she came out, looking scornful. "There's only one woman in there. She's fat, forty-eight, and healthy. She's looking out the window. Are you sure that's your compartment?"

Freddie did not reply. He swooped down the corridor

and peered in the doorway. Certainly, Doña Fernandez seemed to be alive. She looked up at Freddie and smiled maternally. "I feel so much better, señor. You are indeed an excellent doctor. You must tell me the name of that medicine again."

Freddie leaned against the side of the door for support. The blood slowly came back into his face. "G-glad you feel better, ma'am," he whispered hoarsely. Then he staggered back to where the Major and Glorietta were standing. "She's n-not d-dead!" he announced.

"Then we'll continue on this train to Teruel," said the Major, wiping the perspiration from the back of his neck. "Gad, Freddie, you do alarm one. Won't you please dispose of that poison before you meet any more Spanish ladies?"

"You said something then," agreed Freddie. "Here it goes out the window! I'm sorry I made so much fuss, Sis." Freddie took the erring envelope of potash and let it drop from the open window on the corridor side of the train.

"Isn't that the aspirin you dropped?" inquired the Major.

"Hanged if it wasn't!" admitted Freddie, after looking at the other envelope. "Well, I'm nervous, naturally. I guess you'd be. Here goes the other—— What's this?" From the pocket, with the envelope, Freddie had taken also a small card. He looked at it, and then passed it to the Major. "It's a card I got out of a fortune-telling slot machine in the station," he explained. "You know, one of those machines you drop a penny in—a Spain penny—and it tells your future. I just did it for fun. But it's printed in Spain, and I couldn't read it. Whatzit say, Major?"

The Mayor read what was printed on the card and squinted one eye and then the other. Then he passed it to Cervera with a deep sigh. "It says: 'You are of an extremely conservative nature. You must learn not to be so cautious and you will then be more successful.'"

CHAPTER XII

AT MURVIEDRO, there was a two-hour wait for the Fenimore party, before the branch-line train for Calatayud was made up. As the Major and Glorietta, followed by the still unnerved Freddie, alighted upon the platform, they came face to face with Arturo Cervello. He had evidently arrived upon the same train from Barcelona. At his feet was a suitcase, neatly covered with cloth, in the manner of the European traveller, to whom suitcases are too valuable to be marred and scarred in their first ten years of life.

At the sight of Cervello, the Major scowled, but saluted with stiff civility. Glorietta was surprised, but somehow not unpleased. The young Spaniard greeted them with a timid smile, saying, "You are surprised to see me? I beg your pardon greatly, señores and señorita, but I came upon the same train, in the hope that I might be of service to you. I travelled not in the same class with you, so I could not enter your carriage on the way. Will you permit me to ask frankly if I cannot find employment with you as a courier? I know the country very well. Certainly the señor understands and speaks Spanish well, yet I thought——"

"No, thank you," replied the Major abruptly. "We can get along very well. I never use couriers."

"You might let me have a chance to decide this," put in Glorietta warmly. "Really, Major——"

"I'm sorry, Glorietta. Of course I should have asked

you." The Major whispered: "Have nothing to do with this chap, Glorietta. I'm not jealous of him, my word for it. He's a handsome devil and all that. But he's not following us for any good purpose."

Cervello caught the purport of the undertones without difficulty. He winced visibly, but gave no other sign that his pride was hurt. Instead, he burst out, in boyish frankness: "A courier is a servant, señor, and I am not used to being a servant. For that very reason, I can serve you better than any servant, because I know well what a master expects. I will not hide from you that I am poor and need employment. It would perhaps mean little to you and the señorita and much to me."

"The reason is, señor," replied Major Poulson, "first of all, that I do not like you. Can you understand that? This lady is in some degree under my protection and I am responsible for her. You came to this lady the other day and told her that her father had left Barcelona for Teruel. That was the truth. But you did not explain to her how you knew that fact. It needs explaining, Señor Cervello."

Don Arturo maintained, with evident difficulty, the same well-bred poise which never deserted him. "I am sorry that you do not like me, Señor Comandante——"

"How do you know I am—how do you know my military title?" burst out the Major.

"I know, señor. I ask you, sir, whether you have always liked your servants? If they served you well, would you not be content?"

"I would not have them if I did not trust them, at least," shot back the Major tartly.

"I see no reason for hurting this young man's feelings, Sidney," said Glorietta. "He asked civilly enough if we wanted a courier. You told him you did not. Is it necessary

to tell him why so brutally? And, after all, suppose I wanted a courier?"

"Then I should advise you to get another one," was the reply. "Glorietta, I beg you not to be sentimental about this. Even if this man is trustworthy, which he is not, it would be the most awkward situation in the world. When you take a servant, take one from the servant class. Don't ever involve yourself with one of the genteel poor. They make themselves and you miserable."

Glorietta did not reply to the Major. Instead, she addressed Cervello. "When you saw me at the hotel, the other day, you said you were not able to explain how you knew about my father. You even admitted that you knew why he came to Spain. You said you knew something about the Spanish Prisoner. Now, if you would tell us how you know these things——"

"Ah!" broke in the Major, with satisfaction. "That's shooting near the mark. Just explain those little details, will you, señor?"

"I cannot do such," was the frank answer. "You said, that day, that you believed me honourable. Have you changed your mind, señorita?"

"If you would say——" she began—and stopped. The deep, luminous eyes were fixed upon hers, timidly and yet searchingly; and there was something almost hypnotic about them. "No, I think I have not changed my mind."

"I would serve you well, and I might be of great help to you," ventured Cervello.

"You know, Major, something tells me we ought to take him on," said Glorietta, after a pause.

"And something tells me we ought to ask him to be off," growled Poulson.

"What do you think, Freddie?" asked Glorietta sud-

denly, turning to her brother, who had been listening to the colloquy with mild amusement. Freddie saw, or thought he saw, that the Major's dislike of Cervello arose partly from Glorietta's interest in the young man. So it furnished Freddie with a slight relish to say, "Oh, do as you like, Sis, I don't see anything the matter with him. One of these wops looks like another, to me. I've got a heavy bag I'll let him carry, if he wants to."

"You don't know couriers, Freddie," cautioned the Major. "They don't carry bags. They split backsheesh with the men who carry the bags. When I was at Gibraltar——"

"I am honest, señor!" said Cervello, with a twitching mouth.

"But haven't you anything to do that would require your attention?" asked Glorietta. "Haven't you any job at all? Are you really obliged——"

"*No tengo padre ni madre, ni perro que me ladre*," replied Cervello. "That means, in our adverb, señorita, 'I haven't any father or mother, and not even a dog to bark at me.'"

"In your *proverb*," corrected Glorietta kindly.

"Thank you. I make mistakes. Also, we have another proverb, '*Camino de Roma, ni mula coja ni bolsa floja*,' which means, señorita, that there is no getting to Rome, or anywhere, with a lame mule or an empty purse. So, you see, it is explained."

"Damn your proverbs!" muttered the Major. "Glorietta, haven't we had enough of this?"

"I am going to hire him," announced Glorietta sweetly. "I believe he can be of help to us, Major."

"Oh, I say——"

"I am going to hire him," concluded Glorietta firmly. "How much—that is, what salary do you ask, señor?"

"Whatever your ladyship pleases," said Major Poulson, in a whining undertone, in mockery.

But Don Arturo did not make the reply that the Major expected. Instead, he answered in a thoroughly manly fashion: "I know that couriers of training receive five to eight pesetas a day, in the interior. I am not, perhaps, so experienced. I think it should be fair if I receive four pesetas."

"Oh, that's only about sixty cents, at the rate of exchange," objected Glorietta. "I'd be ashamed——"

"Ah, but it is not so bad in Spain," added Cervello quickly.

"Too dashed honest!" warned the Major in a muffled tone to Glorietta. "There's a trick somewhere. I beg you won't be rash, Glorietta."

"I think I shall employ you as our courier, Mr. Cervello —I mean Señor Cervello—and I do think you can help us," said Glorietta. "Major, please be reasonable about it. Somehow I have an intuition——"

"I never heard of a woman's intuition that wasn't a complete washout," grumbled Poulson.

"Perhaps this will be an exception. At least, Major, be decent to him. He's a gentleman, you can see that. He needs money. He's the sort you couldn't give money to."

"Yes," was the bitter response. "He's that sort. There were some of that sort in England after the war. They had really been swells, some of them. But they became the worst sort of cadgers. But this is your party, Glorietta. I'll try to be civil to him. But I don't like him and I don't trust him."

"At least, you are not afraid of him?" laughed Glorietta.

"No matter what he is, we'd be cowardly to be afraid of one poor courier, wouldn't we? Frankly, Sidney, I'm terribly curious about him. And I am sorry for him, too. Isn't that reason enough?"

"If it weren't, you'd find another," was the reply. "Oh, well, I suppose we have a courier, now.—Señor Cervello!"

While this conversation between the Major and Glorietta had been going forward, the young man had withdrawn a little. He came back at the sound of his name. "Oh, señor, the lady decided that she can do with your services. Understand, I'm not in favour of this. I do not like you, but we need not quarrel about that now."

Cervello smiled, and showed two perfect lines of white teeth. It was not a joyous smile, but a smile rather of one who wishes to be amiable. "You are very frank, Señor Comandante, like all the English. It is a frankness not much understood in Spain, but I think I understand it. I do not greatly like you, either, Señor Comandante. But I respect you, and I shall serve your party well. May I get the bags into the station?"

When the new courier had gone, Major Poulson turned to Glorietta and said: "Hanged if he isn't the queerest Spaniard I ever saw. Fancy a Spaniard saying, 'I don't like you, but I respect you.' That's British, Glorietta. Well, I *don't* like him. But dashed if I don't have a sneaking respect for him, too. Still, he'll bear watching."

"I am going to watch him, Sidney," replied Glorietta sweetly.

Even Major Poulson had to admit that, from the moment Arturo Cervello became their courier, the progress of the party became smoother. "It's the difference, Glori-

etta," admitted the Major honestly, "between having a smattering of a language, and *knowing* the language—which means knowing what the people who talk the language think and feel."

Before the exquisite politeness of Arturo, which was displayed as much to the humble artisan in *alpargatas*—hempen sandals—as to the finest *caballeros*, all obstacles gave way. It was a bit of Iberian education for the Americans to watch the social procedure of their courier. He was courteous and firm; never aggressive but never submissive. He got the best seats in a railway carriage without struggling for them, and he obtained the best rooms in the Hôtel Universal, in Teruel, merely by proposing that he could put up with no other—intimating that it would be inflicting a great impertinence upon the hotel proprietor if he accepted less.

"*Quien se hace miel, la comen las moscas*," said Arturo, in trying to explain to Glorietta his policy toward hotelkeepers and others. "I think that would mean, in your language: 'If you make of yourself nothing but honey, the flies would eat you up.' But, señorita, we have another *adagio*—pardon me, I mean 'proverb'—to say that one should carry honey in the mouth and keep an eye on your pocketbook. I do not know how it is in your country, but the hotelkeeper is considered of low class, in Spain, and perhaps he gets his revenge by robbing the traveller of a few pesetas on the bill."

"Don't be stingy, Señor Cervello," cautioned Glorietta, who thought that perhaps her distinguished courier might be leaning backward in his policy of economy. Arturo did not know the word "stingy," but he caught the idea. He merely smiled. He performed wonders with a few copper coins, and a well-placed gift of a cigar, where the Americans

would have spent dollars without getting more than a grudging service.

"The Aragonese," explained Arturo, on one occasion, when Glorietta was plying him with questions about the people of the province they were entering, "are very—what you say?—stubborn. We have a saying that when a baby is born, in Aragon, his mother knocks him over the head with a plate. If the plate breaks, he is a good hard-headed child; but if it does not, then he is soft-headed and will bring his parents only sorrow. That is, of course, only in jokery, no? But the idea is true. The Aragonese are stubborn and require to be managed carefully. But they are good people, kind and self-respectful, and you will like them. But you will not find many city comforts in the place we are going."

"You think my father is perfectly safe where he has gone, then?" asked Glorietta anxiously.

The deep brown eyes clouded for an instant. "Safe, señorita? Oh, yes, he will come to no harm in Teruel. You would be safe anywhere in our Spain. Years ago, there were *rateros* on the roads who plundered the passengers, but that is no longer. He will be safer here than in Chi-ca-go, no?"

Glorietta laughed her fears away upon that gentle sally. "Then you read the newspapers, don't you?" she asked. "I suppose you know all about the crimes of Chicago and Los Angeles over here. Really, señor, it makes me feel ashamed. It is probably true that my father is much safer over here."

"You shall enjoy Teruel, if you do not greatly suffer from the discomforts, señorita," went on Arturo. "Have you heard perhaps of the very wonderful story of the Lovers of Teruel?"

"The Lovers of Teruel? No, I never heard of them. I suppose there have been lovers in Teruel as well as everywhere else."

"Oh, but not like these," was the prompt reply. "These lovers are famous all over Spain, señorita. That was a wonderful love, not exceeded by Romeo and Julieta. From all over Spain come people to see the place where Marsilla and Isabel lived and died. It has been made into plays and poems without number. Do you wish that I should tell you the story one day? For in Teruel you shall see the church where the two lovers are buried, and you could even see their mummies to-day, which are still visible in the church, though for myself I would not look at them, for it is too terrible to see. And they died six hundred years ago."

"You must tell me about them when—after we have found my father, señor."

"Of course, señorita, I understand that your father comes beforehand."

Slowly the train crawled the grade, rising gently and in sweeping curves from the level of the Mediterranean through the rich irrigated fields where semi-tropical fruits flourished and great fields of the greenest lucerne luxuriated under the burning sun; then above them the olive trees, gray and dusty and ages old, scattered hit-or-miss on the hillsides, together with the aloe and the cork oak; past little stations where only a sleepy pair of rural guards leaned against the rude shack, smoking, and seemingly indifferent to the arrival of the train; on again into the wilder lands where grazing sheep stared, started, and fled back toward the spectrelike shepherd; past mediæval villages sitting high above the rails, looking like yellow mirages in the brilliant sunlight—some of them perched

precariously upon the tops of hills, and seeming ready to tumble at a touch; on and on through deep defiles and out again into an occasional black-green glade where the oaks, gnarled and sullen, seemed to cover the retreat of such goblins as Don Quixote met and battled, while his sometimes faithful Sancho brought up timidly at the rear.

"It's not like any other country in the world, Glorietta," cried the Major, in what was for him an outburst of enthusiasm. "No, this is different. Spain is herself and nothing else. There's something about this country that takes you—something you dream about years afterward. It's mysterious, even spooky. See that lonely shepherd up on the crest of the hill? He isn't real. He looks as though he had been cut from a canvas of Goya and set up there as a sort of scarecrow to keep foreigners away."

"It makes me feel creepy," replied Glorietta.

"Yes, I know what you mean. It makes all strangers, who have imagination, feel creepy. And if they have sufficient imagination, they realize that here are one people that they can't understand—half Oriental, half savage, with a beautiful veneer which covers a character so different from ours, Glorietta, that we never could understand each other. In their way, they're splendid. They haven't a single one of our petty meannesses and grubbiness and restlessness. They live life as it should be lived, perhaps, without straining for impossible conquests which crumble in your hands. They're not always torturing themselves by asking 'why? and what next?' but simply accept the sunshine and the rain and the snow and their victuals, and leave questions of conscience to the friars. They're a jolly sensible lot of rascals, when it comes to that! But, really, you wouldn't expect to be very happy through intimacy with one of them, would you?"

As he spoke, Major Poulson gazed fully into Glorietta's eyes. She reddened, for she knew that what the Major was thinking was what she might well have been thinking, herself. "I don't know about that," she countered. "I don't know enough about them to say."

"I know a chap who married a Spanish girl. Jolly pretty girl she was, too, and they were tremendously fond of each other. But, you know, she never looked quite happy, nor did he. I knew the chap well. He was a messmate of mine once. He brought her to England and tried to make an Englishwoman of her. Not half a chance! She was always afraid of losing him to some English girl, I suppose, so she greeted all his friends with a polite sullenness and half-veiled threat that scared them no end. He gave it up and went to Spain. Of course, that's only one instance, but——"

"See that old castle up there on the hill," said Glorietta suddenly. "Can't you imagine there are knights riding in armour around it?"

"Picturesque, isn't it? But as I was saying about this chap who married——"

"I'm really not frantically interested in him," said Glorietta. "But if there's any lesson in it, I think it might be that you shouldn't commit any rash act with one of these exquisite señoritas—though I haven't seen any of them, myself, yet."

"No fear," replied the Major. "But I don't think you got the idea."

"I think I got it very well," replied Glorietta a little acidly. "I think there are exceptions to all rules, Sidney." Whereupon the Major went into what is known as a "brown study," though it has never been explained why

that colour is best for contemplation—any better than, for instance, green.

"Here we are at Teruel," announced Arturo, coming to the door of the compartment a little later. "You need not hasten, Señorita Fenimore. The train will be here for a long time. I will arrange for the carriage of the bags to the hotel, señor. Give yourself no trouble. There is a little restaurant at the station, and I am told that the food there is even better than at the hotel, and they have a wine which you might like to try—a wine of the district."

"He's too deuced clever. He knows too much!" grunted the Major.

"You said you'd be fair to him," replied Glorietta.

"So I will. But I'd like to know a little more about him —not from himself, but from somebody else."

After a good luncheon at the station, they went up through the crooked, narrow streets to a respectable if not overclean hotel within the crumbling walls of the city, not far from the tower of San Martin. A half-dozen children of assorted ages crept out of some crevice and stared at the party wonderingly. The proprietor, lame in one foot, hobbled out from behind an alcove and greeted them with a polite indifference as to whether they wished to stay with him.

"So this is Teruel!" said Glorietta, looking around at the whitewashed walls, which showed signs that the house was innocent of screens. She shivered a little. "Is this the best hotel here, señor?" she asked of Arturo.

"It is not so bad as you fear," was the whispered reply. "I said you would not find many comforts."

There was a staircase at the rear of the hall, and the sound of feet hurriedly descending caused the whole party

to look up. Already, the whole party knew that if they were Spanish feet they would not be in a hurry. Glorietta caught her breath. She wondered, at that instant, whether her father might not be in that very hotel. But a red-faced man, carrying a small bag, and with frightened eyes, cleared the last three steps at a bound and stumbled toward them. For the second time within a few days, Glorietta stared at the burly figure and enormous head and twisted nose of Henry Huckins!

"You here?" cried Huckins, recognizing them and speaking first. "Don't delay me. I'm going for that train. There's a train in, isn't there?"

"Yes, we just arrived," said the Major. "But wait a minute, Mr. Huckins. I wanted——"

"You can't ask me nothing!" cried the man with the twisted nose. "I got no time to talk. I want that train, and I want to get out of this blasted country. I——"

"But this train goes to Calatayud, and if you want to go to Barcelona——"

"I don't care where it goes. I'm going with it. And if you're wise, you won't linger round this place," added Mr. Huckins, plunging through the doorway.

Evidently Mr. Huckins had settled his bill, for the innkeeper saw him go with a placid, unsmiling countenance.

"Did the caballero come here alone?" asked Major Poulson quickly, of the proprietor.

"No, señor, he arrived with a priest."

"Where is the priest?"

The hotelkeeper shrugged his shoulders negatively.

Poulson shot a quick glance at Arturo Cervello. The young man's back was turned, and he was studying an official document, posted on the wall.

CHAPTER XIII

IN ALL of Spain there is no wilder, more primitive part than the choppy sea of mountains and chasms that lies between Teruel and Cuenca. The Pyrenean heights of Huesca and Navarra form a barrier, it is true, across which no railroad has ever been pushed; but on that side of Spain a certain amount of contact with the outside world is maintained by the smugglers. And it is true that, somewhere between Salamanca and Caceres there live two semi-savage groups of left-over Iberians called the Hurdes and the Batuecas, about which even well-informed Spaniards profess to know nothing. But, looking west from the city of Teruel, one looks toward a strange jumble of mountains—the Albarracin Sierras—in which there is hardly a square mile without its ideal location for a stage-coach hold-up. The great river Tagus rises in these mountains and flows through Spain and Portugal to the sea; but nobody knows exactly where it rises, and nobody cares. There is said to be gold in the Albarracin; but the Spaniard does not care enough about gold to pan a river bed for it. Some folks say that the dashing streams are full of large and delicious trout; but the Spaniard is no Izaak Walton, and the trout are safe.

Roads from Teruel City run out toward the west with that careless abandon of provincial Spanish roads. They start well, and get nowhere. At a certain point, the wagon tracks stop, as though the carter had suddenly decided to go back for his umbrella. Then it becomes a saddle path.

Then the path comes to an end, usually at the foot of a great cork tree, and the road becomes nothing. Here and there, seemingly coming from the ground, a little bluish spiral of smoke thrusts up from a crevice in the hills—probably from a shepherd's hut. Some of the hills are as bleak and bare as the high Himalayas, while below, in the cañons, there is a wilderness of trees, black and forbidding, where the woodsman's ax has never been heard. And in places, little beaten paths follow the side of the defiles into the black shade, indicating that someone, sometime, has resorted to this wilderness: either like the young lovesick hermit found by Don Quixote, or more likely to escape the hangman's noose.

This is the country back of Teruel. But Teruel is sprightly. Teruel City fancies itself. Teruel is young and lusty, for Spain, because it was founded quite recently by some Aragonese knights who had been crusading around, chivalrously murdering people and looting their houses, in that delightful age that Cervantes laughed out of existence.

Believe it or not, these knights of Aragon came to a spot of earth that looked well to them. There was a fine star overhead, and a fine bull grazing beneath the star. So, said the knights, we will put the word for star—*estrella*—and the word for bull—*toro*—together, and call this place Teruel. If you do not believe this, you are a hopeless skeptic, and you miss the meaning of that little gilded bull that guards the fountain in the Plaza, where the country people resort to eat watermelons on feast days, drink liberally of wine, dance the Aragonesa until they drop in their tracks, and knife each other with cheery good-will. For a long time, it was a matter of constant warfare among the citizens of Teruel which way the nose of the plaza bull should point. After a number of sudden deaths, the bull's orientation was

accepted; but there never was any question of the position of that star overhead, which shines down upon gray Teruel through a sky so clear that on winter nights you can reach out and pluck a handful of daisies from the Elysian fields.

At the point where the Afambra flows into the Guadalaviar, the walls of Teruel rise, and within the walls, now crumbling and hacked in places, the old town slumbers in the sun. At least, the housetops bask in the burning sun, but the people prefer the shade in summer, and so the streets are narrow, the houses huddled together, and gloomy porticoes shelter the sidewalks. At midday, when the fiery sun is overhead, the town is as deserted as a fairyland under the spell of the magician's wand. It rubs its eyes about the time the sun is slipping behind the walls, yawns, stretches, and gets up to enjoy life. For Teruel is not like Barcelona. The Catalans believe in work. The Teruelese believe in living, first, and if there is any time left over, something may be accomplished. So it was in Teruel that Freddie Fenimore, who was thoroughly disappointed with Spain, first heard the really rollicking notes of a passionate amateur guitar.

"This is more like it," said Freddie. "This is more like Hollywood. They hit a few sour notes, and I've heard a lot better on the Keith and Orpheum circuit, but it's a good show after Barcelona. Barcelona has more big rooms on the ground floor, without anything in them, and more doors that don't lead anywhere, than any place I ever saw."

As soon as they had unpacked their bags at the Universal, Major Poulson came into Freddie Fenimore's room and closed the door behind him. There was a look of grimness on the Major's face that was new to Freddie. Freddie

paused, with a handful of cravats, and asked curiously, "What's the matter, old top? You look worried."

"No, I'm not exactly worried, Freddie," replied the Major, sitting down on the edge of the bed and clasping one knee in his hands, "but I don't fancy this, either. If it were just you and I, on a little jaunt through Spain, it would be a frolic. But you understand, Freddie, that your father has been lured up to this province with the idea of taking a large sum of money away from him."

"A fat lot they'll get from Dad," laughed Freddie. "I don't believe my father has anything more than his carfare with him."

"That's just the point, Freddie. These Spanish Prisoner rascals are the legitimate descendants of the old bandits, the *ladrones*, who used to lie in wait for travellers on the highways. Usually, when the traveller had a good watch and a wallet full of money, they took what he had and gave him a certain amount of courtesy to boot. They weren't out to kill, but merely to rob. But when a victim who looked as though he ought to possess money proved not to have any, it went hard with him. The bandits considered that he had robbed *them* by not having something to be robbed of. Do you get the idea?"

"You mean when they find that Dad is poor picking they'll get sore?" said Freddie.

"Precisely. Of course, I don't know. I'm only considering what their attitude may be. They've got a certain amount of money tied up in the enterprise. Their expenses must amount to a goodish bit. I've an idea that they've already plucked that man with the twisted nose, who left here in a hurry just now. Either that or he's been scared. If they got Huckins's money, perhaps they'll be inclined to regard your father as an eccentric and let it go at that.

On the other hand, it may make them hungrier than ever. —Somehow I'm beginning to wish, Freddie, I hadn't been so prompt to discourage you from bringing those weapons along with you."

"Do you mean it, Major?"

"Yes, Freddie, I do. What are you grinning about?"

"Because, if you mean it, Major," was the response, "I'll let you into a secret. I brought those two guns along with me."

"No, not really? You did? Freddie, you're a young man of intelligence. I've underrated you shamefully. Where are they?"

"In my suitcase."

"Freddie, I don't know that I wouldn't like to borrow one of them till we get back to Barcelona, or Paris, or wherever we quit this wild-goose chase. It's silly, perhaps, and I'm not a dilettante user of firearms, but merely a military man by profession. I don't borrow trouble, but dashed if I don't think I'd feel more at ease with one of them in my hip pocket.—You realize, Freddie, that this young Cervello is spying on us?"

"No! What makes you think so?"

"Use your head, Freddie. Can you imagine him posing as a courier and doing our scullery work, so to speak, to get a few pesetas? That's not reasonable. Well, I don't mind saying that I'm returning the compliment. One good spy deserves another. That's the reason I didn't protest any more energetically at his joining our party. It occurred to me that as long as he is with us, we know pretty much what he is up to. He's already in touch with the leader of his gang, here in Teruel."

"How do you know, Major?"

"Fifteen minutes after we arrived here, he wrote a

note, sealed it in an envelope, and gave it to one of the hotelkeeper's boys to deliver. I'd give a good deal to know exactly to whom it went; but I imagine I shan't have to give much. I already know the house where it was handed in."

"You didn't follow the young fellow. You didn't have time to get back——"

"The hotelkeeper has three other boys besides Cervello's messenger," replied the Major laconically.

"I get you," announced Freddie. "Gee, you're taking this thing pretty seriously, Major. Does Glory know about all this?"

"No, Freddie, she doesn't; and I don't wish her to. The poor girl is travelling on her nerves now. She's clutching at every straw that blows along. This Cervello chap is one of the straws. She hopes that he can lead her to her father. I believe he can, but I think he won't.—But enough of that, for the present. Just let's examine that heavy artillery of yours, will you?"

While the Major was with Freddie, Arturo Cervello was assuring Glorietta that she would meet her father very soon.

"I am certain, señorita," he said, with confidence. "Do not attempt to hurry. Remember, you are in Spain, and, as we say, '*no por mucho madrugar, amanece mas temprano,*' which is the same as saying in your language, you can't make the daybreak come any sooner by getting up early."

"In other words, this is the country of *mañana*," replied Glorietta impatiently, exhibiting in that one word almost her whole store of Spanish.

"Ah, it is true, señorita, that to-morrow seems a better time to most of my countrymen than to-day—at least for the doing of whatever is not so pleasant as the fun of the

moment. Indeed, we know that we are not great at business and science, or even, if you do not count our very best names, at the arts. What a backward, unprogressive people we must seem to you! If you should hear some of our proverbs, you would see that we do not always have great opinion of ourselves; yet it is true that we are proud, and after all we think our Spain is the best of all countries in the world. It is badly governed, and we are not—what is the word?—thrifty; and yet even I, who have been well educated, somehow believe the old saying, '*Quien dice España, dice todo.*' It is absurdity, I know, for when one says Spain in this great modern world, one does not say great thing. Still, that is what we, in our hearts, feel."

"I should like very much to talk of these things with you, señor," said Glorietta, "if only I knew where my father is, and that he is perfectly well and safe. Couldn't you make some inquiries, immediately, about him? It doesn't seem possible that everyone in a small city like this shouldn't have seen him."

"I have no need to inquire. I know that he is here. I know that you will see him to-morrow and not earlier," was the reply. "I mean, señorita, it would not be possible before. If I could do so, I would bring him to you at once."

"Are you sure of this? On your honour, Señor Cervello? Because if you know we shall see him to-morrow and he is perfectly safe, I can begin to enjoy myself.—But you see, Major Poulson doesn't trust you."

"I know, señorita. The Major is a good man. I do not blame him. Neither do you trust me, in spite of what you say. But perhaps you will, later."

"You are wrong. If I didn't trust you, do you suppose you would be here; talking with me? Do you want to know what I think, Don Arturo——"

"You must not call me Don Arturo, señorita. It is not proper to address a courier as 'Don.' That is for higher folks."

"That's just the point, Don Arturo," repeated Glorietta, with a little laugh. "Let me tell you what I am thinking. I believe that we shall wake up some fine morning and see you whisked away in your princely chariot, a coach and eight, all cluttered up with postilions and grooms and whatever else goes with such a rig—poof!—like that. Just a fairy story, after all."

"You think, then," said Cervello slowly, after repeating her words to himself, the better to comprehend her meaning, "you think, then—I think I understand—that I am a rich young man, amusing myself by masquerading as a courier? I have perhaps misunderstood, for I cannot grasp some of your words. But if that is what you mean, it is not such. It would be good for me if it was such. I am a very poor man, señorita. We do not talk much about money in our country where very few are above want, and only a handful are greatly rich; but it is right I should let you know my condition. Not many months ago, I was without anything to eat, very hungry. I was willing to work, but there seemed nothing for me to do. It is not good to tell what one has been, for there are so many people lie about such things; yet you can perhaps see that I was not educated to be—a servant. With some, I could not be. With you, señorita, I think I could be servant always."

"You mustn't say that. That's silly, señor. I can see clearly enough that you are a gentleman. You'll get on your feet, as we say. The right sort of people find their proper place sooner or later."

Cervello shook his head doubtfully. "I do not know. It may be. I would wish to serve you, señorita, wherever you

go. Though the Comandante does not like me, I will serve him well for your sake. It is not necessary to promise. Perhaps, as you say, something better will come to me. Perhaps you would not wish me to continue. But I am bold to ask you, señorita, if when you and your father leave Teruel and continue to travel throughout Europe, you will permit me to serve you. Even would I go to the United States, your great country——"

"Señor Cervello, let me tell you something, before we go any farther!" said Glorietta abruptly. "When we leave Teruel, we are going to leave Spain. That's one thing. When we leave Spain, we shall probably go back to my country. That's another. And the third thing explains them both. Is it possible you are another of those Europeans who think that every American is rich? Do you think my father is rich, Señor Cervello? Do you think we can travel where we choose, in the grand manner, and do what we like?"

Cervello looked rather dazed. "If I am permitted to speak about it, señorita, I—I—yes, I was thinking——"

"Don't think so any more. Really, I don't blame you for thinking so. You couldn't know the difference, of course, just seeing us dash into hotels, and out again, and all that. But you mustn't believe that any longer. We are poor, just as you say you are. I mean, we are poor in the United States, at least. Why, in the United States, I do my own housework. Do you understand that? I mean, we have no servants. My father talks like a million dollars, but he has practically nothing. We live on twenty thousand hopes a year. Do you see that?"

"Hopes? Hopes?" repeated Arturo. "Hopes is not money. Hopes is—*esperanzas*—what you wish to be true, no? Twenty thousand *hopes* a year! Ah, now I understand!"

"You've caught the idea nicely," said Glorietta, with a tinge of bitterness that was too trifling to show itself to the man. In fact, the bitterness was not for lack of money, but only an ironic reflection of the delusion Arturo had been suffering in respect to their state.

Arturo struggled with this new aspect. He was intelligent enough not to imagine that all Americans were rich, but he had certainly obtained the impression that Colonel Fenimore, his daughter and son, were of the fortunate class. So far as he could discern, they had given every evidence of it. After a pause, the young man added, as though he had found a loophole of belief: "Ah, I think I see. You are not rich, as Señor Ford is rich. This is what you mean. You have no servants because you do not like them. You would live simply."

Glorietta shook her head decidedly. She was determined that there should be no misunderstanding; and she even found that it gave her a sorry sort of satisfaction to blurt out the truth, now that she had started. "We have nothing —nothing but what we shall use in travelling here and back to the United States. Not even a house of our own, because we are using the money I got from mortgaging the house. Is that clear? There's really no reason why I should tell the world this, señor, but since we are swapping confidences, that's that."

"Not rich! Not a home!" repeated Cervello thoughtfully. His fine eyes suddenly took on a new light. He gazed into Glorietta's face so steadily, and so sympathetically, that she instinctively turned away. "If it is true, what you say, señorita, then—then—I do not wish to be annoyance to you—but I could hope—I have difficulty to express myself —but please to understand me—I have new hope—*esperanza*—of my own. There would be reason——"

"What do you hope now?" asked Glorietta, looking at him out of the corners of her eyes, with her head turned half away. She inquired with an air of innocence, which was possibly not wholly guileless.

"I do not dare to think," was the soft answer. "It is something I should not speak of now. I am bewilder, I think such is the word. I have had no very much hopes, as you call them, because I had no family, and nothing seemed worth while, except to earn bread. There have been days when I did not care. I did not wish to die, but there was no good reason for living. Señorita, tell me—and I shall not ask you anything more—your heart—here—is it belonging to any man?"

Cervello had, in a flash, become an altogether different man. That youthfulness that had so amused and captivated Glorietta, and yet for which she felt a shade of contempt, was gone. Something burned in the deep pools of eyes that she had never glimpsed before. He stood before her, his hands outstretched, his head erect, looking into her face with a passion that seemed to have something unearthly about it—that seemed to be almost an act of pagan worship. Without knowing, or asking herself why, Glorietta felt a tremor shaking her to the innermost recesses of herself. For a moment, she felt herself drawn toward this fine product of a different race as though it had all been sealed and settled years before, and payment was only now coming due. "If I look at him, I don't know what will happen to me!" she told herself. "He isn't making love to me; he's just asking me a reasonable question—and I'm only half under control, already. Pshaw! Glorietta, don't be a fool! Treat it like a melodrama! They're all this way—those Latins. They start by telling everything they know and showing everything they feel. Or perhaps even

more than they feel. Perhaps they're just natural-born actors!"

So she continued silent, and Arturo felt that he was rebuked. A deep flush spread over his face and he murmured: "I beg your pardon. It was not right. I am a servant."

"No, you are not a servant. Don't say that again. We are both poor, Don Arturo, but we are not afraid to be ourselves. No, it was not that. I merely wanted to know how to answer you. You asked me if I had given my heart to any man. I will tell you truthfully, because it would not be fair to lie. I have not given my heart. I am very, very fond of Major Poulson. He and I are pals. Do you know what a pal is?"

"Pal? No, señorita. I do not know. Is it friend?"

"Yes, friend. But more than that—a friend you always feel you can trust, no matter what happens. A friend who is always there when you need friendship and never asks the price. Do you see?"

Don Arturo nodded. "Is it possible—possible," he added, "to have more than one friend like such?"

"Why not? At least I should want to think so."

"But you would wish, perhaps sometime, to prefer one friend to another? Would not one friend be wounded?"

Glorietta was silent. Then, "We had better not say any more about it, Don Arturo. I must first find my father. That is what I came to do."

But after he had gone, the young woman sat with clenched hands for a long time. "That's a tough question, that last one of yours, Arturo! What *is* the answer?"

Major Poulson came briskly to Glorietta's door and knocked. As he entered, he began to speak, and he showed

unwonted fervour. "By George, Glorietta, I've run into something queer! I hadn't gone a hundred steps from the hotel, on a little reconnoitring party of my own, when I came plump against a fellow we know. I knew I'd seen him somewhere; I was dead sure of it; but I couldn't place him. Something told me I must place him. I followed him a short distance and caught another good look at his face, and I was more certain than ever. And yet there was something changed about him. So I went down to the Plaza and walked about, cudgelling my brains about it; and suddenly, as I was watching a crowd of gamins playing bullfight at one side of the square—and the bull was getting unmercifully prodded, let me tell you—it came upon me like a flash. The chap had shaved off his moustache!"

"I refuse to get excited about a man shaving off his moustache, Major. I wouldn't even get aroused if you shaved yours. Suppose you tell me who it was?" As a matter of fact, Glorietta's thoughts were still straying.

"The Jefe! The Chief of Police of Barcelona! Fancy that!"

"The Chief of Police of Barcelona? That lovely moustache! What a pity! But he can grow another one, can't he? —Oh, don't look at me so ferociously, Sidney! I'll get excited if you'll tell me why I should."

"Glorietta, your imagination is failing you. You disappoint me, really. Can you tell me that you don't think it remarkable that the Chief of Police of Barcelona should commit that assault upon a face that was eminently satisfactory to him and come several hundred miles to a place like this unless there was an important reason?"

"Why didn't you ask him the reason, Sidney?"

"There's another queer thing. He knew me, as we passed.

I'm certain of it. He looked at me quickly and made a sort of signal with his eyes as though he didn't want to be recognized."

"He has a lady friend in Teruel, perhaps. Even the Spanish police are not above suspicion.—Oh, don't give me up in disgust, Sidney! I'll be serious. Somehow, I just feel in a kittenish mood at the moment. I really think I'm almost happy. I feel positively assured that we'll have Dad with us in a few hours and——"

"So do I," interrupted the Major quickly. "But not without fireworks. And not through any sources which you may be depending upon."

"What do you mean by that, Sidney?" asked the young woman. But the Major had taken his hat and departed in a huff.

"I'm a fool!" cried Glorietta suddenly, springing from her chair. "Sidney doesn't get excited over nothing!" And she ran down the whitewashed corridor after him.

CHAPTER XIV

SEÑOR CERVELLO asked permission of Glorietta to be away from the hotel for an hour or so. When he returned, he announced, with a show of elation:

"It is all arranged, señorita. To-morrow afternoon, at five o'clock, you shall see your father. He is not in the city, but a short distance away. I can arrange to have an automobile take you out to where he is to be found. It is not a fine automobile, and the road is not smooth, but the distance is not much, so perhaps you can endure it."

"But why not now?" asked Glorietta quickly. "This is really too mysterious, Don Arturo. I tell you frankly, I don't like it. Major Poulson has been inquiring of the Alcalde for my father. The time has come for you to say frankly what you know about it. I'm really not so worried about my father as I was, but I see no reason for all this melodrama."

"You will understand everything to-morrow afternoon," was the smiling reply. "You must trust me a little more, señorita, and then it will be over. Above all, please do nothing until then. I ask you not to permit the Comandante to do anything, or to try to find your father, meanwhile. It would not be of avail, and it might not be good for your father, for you, or for anybody."

"I am not frightened, Don Arturo. I tell you again, I don't like this stage play. Do you understand what the Major suspects about you?"

"I think it possible I do, señorita."

"In case you happen to be mistaken, I'm going to tell you. The Major thinks that you are in league with these people who practise the Spanish Prisoner swindle."

"I knew he did think that, myself. Do you think so, also, señorita?"

She looked at him, wondering what she thought. "No," she answered finally. "I do not. But I think you are—I hope you'll forgive me, Don Arturo—I think you are a romantic. I think you want to dramatize something which is at bottom very sordid and foolish. I can't help thinking so."

Again Cervello smiled mystically. "It is perhaps so, and perhaps not. If you will trust me a little more, you shall see that I am neither rascal nor idiot."

"I did not say I thought you were either, señor. That is not a fair construction to put on what I said. But I have gone so far that there's no use turning back. Besides, if my father is here, or near here, I feel much easier. Is there any other way he could leave this province without taking the train from this city?"

"No, señorita. That is, it would be ridiculous for him to try. Of course, there are roads which lead out, but they are not good roads for travel. There is a diligence for Aliaga, I think, but of a certainty he would not go that way. No, he must surely come back here and go either to Calatayud or Murviedro. So you can be peaceful about that."

"Very well then, señor. I don't mind spending a day or two here. In fact, I rather like what I've seen of the place. You can tell me what there is to see."

"I'm afraid there is not much," replied Arturo. "The city is ugly, I think. The walls, certainly, are very old, and Los Arcos—the great aqueduct you saw as you entered—is picturesque. There are the two gate towers, which are in

the Moorish style, but not greatly ancient. I think, perhaps, you would be mostly interested in the little things. Very often there is something of importance, truly Spanish, taking place here. Would you wish that I ask the hotel-keeper what there is of interest?"

"Let's do that now," replied Glorietta.

Pedro Flassa, the keeper of the Universal, was a round little man, having the appearance of a musical-comedy bandit. To a deep voice he added a ferocious glare which seemed to say: "Beware of me if I become angry! I am a terrible man when aroused." But the truth was that Señor Flassa was a much-married man, and dreadfully henpecked, not only by his wife and eldest daughter, but also by his mother and his wife's mother. Thirteen members of the two families somehow managed to eke out an existence from Flassa's hotel. How they could do it and remain as well fed as they looked was a mystery, for there appeared to be nobody staying at the hotel except the Fenimore party and two travelling salesmen who had been caught in the town overnight, and spoke disrespectfully of the hotel, the food, of Flassa, and of provincial Spain in general.

The Universal affected to be modern. It said so, on the little printed cards that lay upon the desk in the office. To the extent that it had a telephone which seemed to be out of order, or connected with nothing but the wall. and subscribed for *Blanco y Negro*, out of which the Flassa children cut the pictures before any possible guest could see it, it was modern. In other respects, it was of the period of the Knight Amador, of blessed memory.

When Arturo inquired of Señor Flassa whether there was anything of importance happening in Teruel that week, adding that the American lady would like to see some

cosa d'España, Pedro Flassa replied with a reproachful wave of the hand: "No novelty, thank God!" Thus it was plain that Pedro held with the old-time Spaniards that the ideal life was one in which nothing unusual happened, an existence *sin novedades*—and perhaps there was a greater philosophy in this than Pedro knew. Long experience has taught country people that novelties are usually unpleasant, at their conclusion.

"But this week sees the celebration of Corpus Christi, señor?"

"Yes, that is true. But that is usual."

"Yet they are making preparations for the holiday? There will be a bullfight?"

At the words "bullfight," Señor Flassa became enlivened and impetuous. He almost bounded from his chair, and brought down upon the desk a great ham of a fist, which rocked the inkwell—which contained no ink. "The bullfight—yes, indeed! What do you think, señor? That imbecile of an alcalde issued orders this year that we were to have no bullfight. Corpus Christi without a *corrida de toro* —it is unthinkable. Well for the Alcalde that he changed his mind in time. A hundred men gathered around his house and called him ass, and threatened to burn his place, which would have been done had he not changed his order. Only think, señor, what a magnificent bull we shall have—a black three-year-old given us by the Conde Saltilla, who is of all men the most generous and wise. The whole world will come to Teruel to see that sport."

"Tell me what he said, quickly! I know it must be interesting," said Glorietta.

Cervello told her, and added, "Really, you have come to Teruel at the right moment, señorita. This bullfight will be never forgotten by you and your family."

"Oh, a bullfight!" replied Glorietta with a shiver of repulsion. "No, thank you! I've heard about them, and I think they are the most brutal sport imaginable. I don't see how you can tolerate them."

"I agree with you, señorita," replied Arturo heartily. "I have no love for that sport and never go to see them. The cruelty to the horses makes me sick at heart, and the bull has no fair chance. But this is different, señorita. You must see this one, for it may be you shall never see anything like it. There is no true arena in a little place like Teruel, you know. The great professional bullfighters never would come here. Simply will these country people build a kind of ring around the Plaza, with ox carts and such, and the bull will be loosened there, and any amateur who wishes to try his luck with the bull may have his chance. It will be most comic, señorita, for they do not know how to fight bulls, and make the most ludicrave show. Nor need you be afraid that the bull will have no fair opportunity, señorita, for the truth is, he will prove more than a match for most of them. You will see some of them tossed into the ox carts."

"But the bull will kill them!" cried Glorietta, aghast at such a prospect.

"I do not think so. It is possible, but very seldom is anybody badly hurt. Once in ever, the great fighters of the arena, like Belmonte, are killed, but these countrymen have the tough skins and take terrible blows. There will be many swaggerers who will prove their fortune."

"I almost believe I could watch it, if no horses are gored and the bull has a fair chance," said Glorietta. "Ask him when it takes place."

"On the day of Corpus Christi. That is day after tomorrow. Already the people are getting ready. You will

see bright flags and shawls already hanging from the windows. It is a great holiday in Spain, señorita."

"I think it would amuse Freddie and my father. No doubt they'll want to see it," concluded the young woman.

When Major Poulson returned, he reported that the Alcalde—or Mayor—had promised to send a couple of members of the civil guard to look for Colonel Fenimore. "He received me kindly," added the Major, "but he won't do anything. The alcaldes never do. There is nothing in it for him but a trifling annoyance. He expressed a desire to see the Colonel's daughter and son, and will smoke as many of your father's cigars as he can get. He will also show us the utmost in politeness and do nothing. I've been to the two other hotels in the city, and your father is not registered. I've walked about seven miles, in addition. But we've one satisfaction. This is just as hard a place to get out of as into. If your father is here, we've got him!"

"I'm not worrying any more about it. All the arrangements are made, Sidney. I'm to go to get Dad to-morrow afternoon at five o'clock."

"To-morrow afternoon at five o'clock! Arrangements made? Who made the arrangements? You *do* look relieved, Glorietta. Tell me about it. Have you managed——"

"You won't like the idea, Sidney. But I'm sure it's all right. You don't like my intuition, but I'm quite fond of it. I've been talking with Arturo, and he has made definite arrangements——"

"The devil he has!" exclaimed the Major. "He wants you to walk into a trap, does he?"

"Oh, Sidney, you've got a preconceived judgment, and you're making everything conform to it. Arturo knows where Dad is, but that isn't any proof that he isn't all

right. You can easily think of situations where you might know things and not be able to tell—at least, not prematurely. I've begun to have an inkling of what he is up to. I'm surprised you haven't guessed it, as well."

"You mean that Cervello is in love with you?" The Major spoke without a shade of flippancy. He looked at her steadfastly and earnestly.

"You have no right to say anything like that, Sidney!" was the retort, with a flush of anger. "Do you take me for a fool? Do you think I imagine that men fall in love with me on a few days' acquaintance?"

"I'm sorry, Glorietta, if I offended you. But, frankly, I rather think he is. And if he is, it's the only good thing I know about him. At the same time, he is stony broke, and I don't know that a Spaniard would forget the main chance."

This reply did not help to appease Glorietta. Indeed, she was wondering at the moment just how much of a fool she really might be, and her very uncertainty, and her resentment against the strange weakness she felt in Arturo's presence, irritated her. So she chose to believe that Poulson was taking unwarrantable liberties with her affairs.

"At any rate, Sidney, I'm going out at five o'clock tomorrow afternoon," she concluded obstinately. "I'm not a child. I can take care of myself."

"Very well. I will go with you," was the calm answer.

The very calmness and assurance of the Major's tone infuriated her. "I forbid you to go with me. I am going alone!"

"You are not going alone," was the imperturbable response. "I am going with you."

"I never thought you would resort to cave-man tactics, Sidney," she sneered, shaking with anger.

"You are angry with me, and you don't care what you say," said Poulson, flushing. "You know I am not a cave man. But you don't understand, or don't seem to be willing to understand, that you are in the wildest part of Spain, and you are engaging to drive off God knows where with a young man who, to say the least, hasn't given a good account of himself. You are doing this on a whim, a peevish whim, and you choose to call it an intuition. I don't say that you must not go. I've no right to say that. I do say that, if you go, I shall go with you."

"And I say that, if you do, I shall not speak to you again. I don't know whether you realize it or not, Sidney, but you've been showing a little too much proprietary interest lately. I'm perfectly aware of my obligations to you. You have been extremely good to me. But I haven't given you the slightest reason to suppose that just because you issue instructions, I must necessarily obey. I am not your wife; and this sort of thing makes me rather glad I'm not. I won't be tyrannized over."

"No, you are not my wife, worse luck!" was the sombre reply. "If you were, we wouldn't be messing around like this. But I entertain hopes that you will be my wife, one of these days, Glorietta, for you know that I love you."

"You couldn't have picked a worse time to say it! At first you were casual, Sidney. 'Marry me and I'll go to London!' Now you are peremptory: 'Marry me, and do as I tell you!' I like one method just as little as the other.—Oh, come, Sidney, we've been too good friends to quarrel like this. You stay here in Teruel, like a good boy, and I'll go out and get my father, and then we'll start all over again."

"When you leave here, I'll be with you. And I don't fancy being called a good boy. If young Cervello resents my

presence in his automobile, I'll be glad to punch his head. You are not going alone. I hate to assume this air of authority, but if you don't take me, there'll be a devil of a row, I promise you that, Glorietta. I'm responsible for your safety."

"If you insist on going where you're not wanted, I can't prevent it, I suppose," said Glorietta, beside herself with passion. "But so far as I'm concerned, you won't be there. And I'll not speak to you again. I mean it, every word."

"Very well," was the slow reply, "I accept your words at their face value. It's a great pity. I don't think you realize what it means to me. But if you will have it so, I can't help it. I'm going with you." And the Major stalked out with clenched teeth.

"Well, of all the stubborn British mules, he's the limit!" gasped Glorietta, feeling self-righteous and ridiculous at the same moment. But she added, with a determination of her own, "I mean it, though. I'm done with him, if he's going to show a bulldozing attitude like that!"

Glorietta's idea had been to take Freddie along with her. But, feeling that Major Poulson would be as good as his word, if not better, and realizing that a breach between Freddie and the Major at this moment would be awkward, she decided to say nothing to her brother. Freddie, however, the next morning, when they strolled out through the gray town until the mounting sun forced them to take refuge at an outdoor café beneath one of the porticoed buildings, observed that the relations between his sister and Poulson were strained. They spoke together, it was true, but with that polite reserve that regularly exists between two rival merchants, and the studied smile of the Major was as meaningless as the grin of a country banker.

"Say, Sis, what's the trouble between you and our

British cousin?" asked Freddie, tossing off the last of his glass of lemonade and calling for another. "Poulson doesn't look happy."

"He wasn't born to be an optimist, Freddie," was the ironical reply, though it was a petty remark, and Glorietta winced at the sound of her own words. But she had made up her mind to be definitely inimical if the Major did not back down. Also, she knew that backing down was not in Poulson's nature.

"I'm going out for a short drive this afternoon, about five, Freddie," explained Glorietta. "You amuse yourself, and don't get into trouble, and if everything goes well, I'll probably bring Dad back with me."

"What? Who told you so? Say, Sis, you're not relying too strong on that manicured courier of ours, are you? I've been thinking him over, and I don't know but the Major is all right about him. I think what we ought to do——"

"You just keep on thinking, Freddie," retorted Glorietta. "If I don't bring Dad back with me, then you and the Major can get together and think hard and see what you two can do. If you go out this evening, be sure to come back to the hotel at seven. That's all."

At five o'clock that afternoon, with a punctuality that was the miracle of Spain, a dilapidated sedan, which seemed to have been one of the spoils of the American contribution to the war in France, drove up in front of the Universal. It was lacking a front fender on the left side, and was hitting bravely on three of its cylinders. The driver was a wall-eyed youth with two projecting teeth which rested on his lower lip and had a silly rather than villainous appearance.

"Señorita, the automobile is ready," announced Cer-

vello to Glorietta, who was sitting moodily in the lower hall, for there was no parlour in the hotel.

"Righto! I'm going along with her!" said the Major, in Spanish, springing from his chair.

"I was going to suggest such," replied Arturo, with a smile of mysterious pleasure on his lips. "I cannot go with you, señorita, but shall go a few minutes later, though we should arrive at the same time. Thus, I was going to suggest that the Comandante accompany you."

The Major was surprised, and showed it. Glorietta looked exceedingly sheepish, since the Major was now clearly within his rights in being her companion. But the young woman said nothing. She went out and entered the taxi—for so the young driver called it—and waited. The Major got in by her side. She moved over rather more than was necessary to make room for him.

"You have your orders," said Cervello to the driver, who was deliberately rolling a cigarette. The driver nodded, lighted his cigarette, and proceeded up the street of Alfonso XIII at a breakneck speed, considering the age of the car and its questionable motor. In other words, the chauffeur proceeded on the infallible plan of the European conveyance: the rougher the road, the faster you try to go.

Before they had cleared the walled part of the city, Glorietta found herself almost seated in the Major's lap. Then her head rested on his shoulder. Then her hat suddenly struck the top of the car and was jammed down over her eyes.

"P-please tell him n-n-n-not to d-d-drive so f-f-fast, Sidney!" she begged.

The Major did so, and the result was that they went faster. But soon they were on a hard gravel highway, much smoother, and the two occupants righted themselves. The

Major tried a little jocularity. "We were only going ahead fifteen miles an hour, Glorietta, but we were going another fifteen miles from side to side. That's a wheeze I heard just before we left Los Angeles. Rather neat, don't you think?"

Glorietta did not answer.

Up hill, to the west, the taxi went, round some dizzy turns where the road seemed carved from solid rock and the tops of the trees below seemed to beckon them down; past little Moorish houses built against the mountain side, in the front yards of which half-naked children looked up from play and stared at the passing monster—for automobiles are not yet a well-accustomed sight in this part of Spain. They must have gone a dozen miles, when the Major, peering from his window, and seeing that they were entering a sort of cañon, in the bottom of which a brook roared and tumbled, said:

"Do you mind saying, Glorietta, where this place is that we're bound for?"

"I don't know," was the short answer—and the truthful one. The Major looked behind. From the rear window of the sedan, which had been broken and mended with a heavy sheet of translucent paper, a carriage could be seen, some distance behind, following painfully. The grade was steeper now, and the defile, darkly wooded on both sides, much narrower.

Suddenly the car stopped so quickly that both occupants of the rear seat were thrown forward against the back of the front seat. The driver shouted something. It was not quite dark in the defile, but the limp visor of the windshield hid the road nearly from view.

There was a quick command from the side of the road, and instantly the driver opened the door and leaped from the car, and the two passengers heard his boots rattle on

the road behind them, as though he were running and slipping at the same time.

"You will please to get out!" said a voice at the side of the car.

"Get out on this side and let me get out on the other," whispered Major Poulson. And, as Glorietta, puzzled and half frightened, did not make a move, the Major took her gently and eased her through the left-hand door. Then he quickly opened the other door and jumped out.

"We mean no harm," said a stout man, who stood just at the foot of a large tree, where the automobile had stopped. Another tree, of no great size, but sufficient to make an impassable barrier, had been felled directly across the road. "We mean no harm," the man repeated in English with a strong accent, "but we shall have to ask you, señorita and señor, to come with us."

"Not at all, not at all!" barked the Major, reaching for his right-hand hip pocket. "I rather expected this! You may go to the devil! Glorietta, get back in the motor! I'll——"

"Major—behind you—quick!" shrieked Glorietta, pointing and at the same time leaping forward as though to save her companion. The warning came too late. Another man, shorter and stouter than the one who had spoken, and carrying a heavy stick, had stepped out from behind a tree on the opposite side of the road, and dealt Poulson a heavy blow on the side of the head. The Major fell without a sound, crumpling up like a wet newspaper. The man who struck the blow came forward, stared down at his victim, and shrugged his shoulders. He said something to his companion in Spanish, and the latter, approaching Glorietta, advised her: "Get into the automobile, señorita, and wait. We shall be back quickly. We did

not wish to hurt the caballero, but—you see—" he stooped over and took a pistol from the Major's pocket, and had to unclasp the fingers of the senseless man from its butt—"you see. Heh! He would have hurt *us !* Wait—we shall be back quickly."

In another moment, Glorietta was alone. She looked down at the unconscious man at her feet for a moment, the tears streaming down her face. Then she got possession of herself and kneeled down, tore open his coat, and put her ear at his breast. In doing so, her hand touched the hair on one side of his head, and when her hand came away it was red with blood.

"Water, I must have cold water!" the young woman cried. Then she thought: "The brook!"

It was fast coming dark. Glorietta heard shouts on the road behind. Below the road the brook laughed and chattered. She took off her hat and stumbled blindly down the steep incline toward the water.

CHAPTER XV

GLORIETTA FENIMORE wondered afterward whether it was that she had fainted from the nervous exertion, or whether, scrambling up the sharp slope, she fell and was stunned. At any rate, she clearly recalled that a sharp flash went across her eyes, and just as she lost consciousness, she seemed to hear a thousand voices, deeply murmuring. With this, she had a surviving sense of being hurried along, unprotesting, faster and faster.

When she came to her senses, it was all dark around her. There was not a sound. In that uncertainty of place which accompanied the half-wakening, half-sleeping senses, the young woman's first thought was that she was in bed, perhaps at the hotel. But she put her hand down and felt her dress, and knew that she was lying somewhere fully clothed. As her hand wandered to the side, it felt something uneven, rough, and sharp. Her fingers clenched it, and knew it to be straw. She lay there for some time, trying to reconstruct the incidents that were swirling in her mind. Gradually it straightened itself out. She recalled the Major, lying senseless; and the warning of the thickset man, in broken English: "Get into the automobile, señorita, and wait!" Then, of going to the brook for water, and of falling . . .

"But where am I now?—and where is the Major?" were the two first coherent thoughts. Glorietta rose on one arm and tried to look around. A single shaft of uncertain light

slanted across her vision. She rose and looked toward its origin, and made out with difficulty a window above her head—or what seemed to be a window—with bars of some sort. Finally, her eyes adjusted themselves to the gloom and she felt she was in a room. To make certain, she walked in one direction till she came to a wall, and then, keeping her hand against it, continued along the four sides of the rectangle. It was a room of some kind, without question, and from the fact that she struck no object on her round, a room without any furnishings whatever. The single light, if it could be called a light, came from the high aperture with the vertical bars across it.

At first Glorietta felt no sense of disaster whatever. She was still too hazy about it all. But, as her mind clarified, her heart began to thump with plain, unadulterated fear: fear for herself and fear for the Major. A great throbbing cry arose within her, and she instinctively gave it utterance. "Sidney!"

There was a dull echo of her own voice first. Then a dead silence. Then it seemed as though a muffled answer came. But the last might easily have been a miragelike answer to her hopes. She waited awhile and then called the Major's name again. This time, there was no mistake about it. There *was* a reply, very faint, and quite obviously not in the room where Glorietta was. Then, as she was considering pacing the four sides again, seeking an opening somewhere, a clearer voice said:

"Glorietta! Is that you?"

"Yes. Is it you, Sidney?"

"Yes. There seems to be a wall between us. I am lying on the ground. There's a sort of slit beneath the partition. Can you gauge where my voice is coming from?"

"I think I can. Can you hear me distinctly?"

"No, not distinctly. See if you can come toward me."

She found the place at last. By dropping on her knees in the straw, on the wall-side where Poulson's voice seemed to come from, and running her fingers along the ground—encountering sometimes earth and sometimes what seemed to be rotted planks—Glorietta finally came to the spot. She lay flat on her stomach, put her face to this place, and spoke.

"That's right!" came back plainly. "You've found it, dear girl. I'm sticking my fingers underneath. See if you can touch them!"

With a sob of sheer joy, Glorietta touched the Major's fingers, and tried vainly to clasp them in her own, but there was only sufficient room for his in that tiny slit. Yet life seemed to come rolling back to her, in a full tide, at that little contact. She was no longer alone! And here was positive proof that Poulson was alive, and, judging from the firmness and steadiness of his voice, not badly hurt.

"Sidney—are you—are you all right?"

"I've got a lump on the side of my head as big as a cricket ball. And I feel a bit shaken up. Otherwise, I'm as fit as a fiddle. You are not hurt, yourself?"

"Not in the least. I think I must have fainted. Have you any idea where we are?"

"Not in the least. But I know I didn't walk here. We both must have been carried. Consequently, we can't be very far away from where the automobile was held up. I haven't been robbed of a single thing, and my watch is still going. I can see the illuminated hands clearly. It's quarter after seven. Do you recall whether it was clear or cloudy as we came up the road?"

"I think it was cloudy. I seem to recollect that it looked stormy. Why do you ask that, Sidney?"

"It would account for its being so dark. It shouldn't be so dark at this hour, at this time of year. Is there any light at all in your side?"

"Just a sort of window above my head, that seems to be barred."

"It is the same in here. I seem to be in an empty room, with a table top in the centre, mounted on barrels. There are several other barrels and kegs scattered around. Straw on the floor. Glorietta, this is a predicament! But don't be afraid, dear girl. Wait a minute! I'm going to see if I can reach that little window by building up the barrels against the wall."

Glorietta waited what seemed to her to be several days before Poulson's voice came to her again: "I reached it easily enough. It wasn't quite so high as it seemed. But it was no use. The bars are iron and the spaces too narrow to squeeze through. Have you found a door?"

"I thought I felt a door on the side—*that* side—of course you can't see me—on the side opposite my window."

"Exactly the same in here," came from the Major. "But it fits tightly, and there's no way to pry at it. Don't lose heart, dear girl, I must think this out a little further."

There was a long silence. Meanwhile, Glorietta was not thinking of ways of escape. The fact that her stubbornness had led them both into the very trap that the Major predicted was being laid for them tore at her heart. She recalled, with quivering lips, the futile and childish wilfulness she had shown toward the Major when he insisted upon accompanying her. Worse than all, the shame of her weak belief in the good intentions of Cervello, against all the apparent indications, crushed her. She knew, in her soul, that she had deliberately let herself be victimized by the romance of occasion. "I didn't even have the excuse

that Cervello made love to me!" she thought with an inward groan. "I didn't give him a chance. I built up a silly, exotic love affair in my own foolish head."

Suddenly, almost in a fury against herself, Glorietta burst out, "Sidney, why don't you tell me what you think of me? It would be a relief! Tell me!"

"You know what I think of you, Glorietta," came the even reply. "I'm frightfully in love with you. You're a splendid girl."

"Oh, don't say that, Sidney," she pleaded. "Even if you mean it, it sounds like mockery. I didn't mean that. You know it. Why don't you tell me what you must be thinking: that my silly vanity has led us into this mess? Please don't be superhuman, Sidney. At least tell me that you warned me, right along, and I *would* insist on doing as I pleased. It's true."

"That's rot, Glorietta," was the calm reply. "You're getting excited. That won't do. There's nobody to blame, though I'd rather, when we get away from here, you wouldn't tell anybody what an incompetent ass I proved myself when I let some brute smite me from behind, just when I had the situation well in hand. By George, that was feeble! Freddie could have done better than that. Unfortunately, Freddie didn't come along. We might not be here."

"But I *did* cause all this trouble," insisted Glorietta tearfully. She did not directly mention Arturo Cervello, but that strange, melancholy figure was always painfully before their eyes.

"I don't like post-mortems, Glorietta," was the answer. "Never could endure them. Never could stand these bridge players who want to play their hand all over again after the rubber is scored. The confounded Spaniards have

a good proverb, little girl. '*Paciencia y barajar*,' they say, when anything goes wrong. It means, 'Have patience, and shuffle the cards again.' That's our cue. So buck up and let's shuffle our cards again!"

"Tell me you forgive me, Sidney," pleaded Glorietta tearfully.

"I don't forgive you, because there's nothing to forgive. So that's that." The Major's voice suddenly fell to a whisper. "Did you hear a voice, or two voices, then?"

"No," Glorietta whispered back. They were both silent, listening.

"It's outside. I'm certain there's somebody near," said Poulson, at last. "We'll know, soon, if they're coming here. I'm going to get up now and look around some more."

"Wait, just a minute, Sidney. What sort of place do you think we're in? Is it a prison, or was it meant for one?"

"Oh, I hardly think so. There wouldn't be any reason for a prison at this spot. It strikes me it's a sort of warehouse, or storehouse. Don't you get a vinegary odour, rather? I'm sure there has been wine stored in this room. I——"

But Glorietta heard no more. A sound outside her door brought her to her feet, trembling. The door creaked and swung open, and a blaze of light—feeble enough, for it came from a queer kind of lantern, held face-high by one of two men, and yet it seemed like a sudden glare from a searchlight, in the darkness—blinded her.

"I am so sorry, señorita," began one of the men—and then he corrected himself to: "*We* are so sorry to give you so much pain. We mean you no harm, you shall not be hurt. Do not fear; within a few hours you shall be back at your hotel, if you are patient and give no trouble."

The two men conversed in low tones in Spanish. Then the one who spoke English went on, as though the other

had ordered him to impress upon the woman their pacific intentions: "It is even that we did not intend to hurt your companion, the Comandante. But what could we do? He was armed with a pistol, and we prefer whole skins. Our very deep regrets that this short imprisonment is necessary, señorita."

There was a practical sincerity in the tones that offered a vast relief to Glorietta. She felt relieved enough to become indignant.

"You have no right to treat us this way. Don't you know that you will be likely to go to prison for this?"

"*Qué dice?*" asked the stouter of the two men, of his companion.

"She says we shall go to prison for this," explained the other, in Spanish, with a staccato laugh. The other man responded with a hearty guffaw. Again they conversed in their own tongue. Then the man with the lantern continued:

"I will explain to you, señorita. We are business men, and we do not fear to go to prison. Not for anything would we have submitted you and the Englishman to this inconvenience if you had not forced us. Señorita, you should not have come to Spain. You have annoyed us. We had business with your father, the Colonel, and you have tried to spoil our business."

"Of course I did. Your business is to rob people. You are trying to rob my father——"

"Oho, señorita, you are angry! Do not be angry! We do not rob people. We are like other business people, we have something to sell. Only greedy and dishonest people would try to buy what we have to sell. But I must not discuss with a lady. I simply tell you that you and the Englishman have yourselves to blame for this inconveni-

ence. You are trying to spoil our business. We do not like it. We knew when you came to Paris and when you came to Barcelona. We have eyes everywhere. We——"

"And spies!" cried Glorietta bitterly.

"Spies? No, señorita, merely clerks. Every business has employees. I, myself, am only an employee. The other señor is the——"

But the other señor, who had been listening to all this without understanding the words, evidently frowned upon unnecessary loquacity, for he suddenly seized the interpreter by the arm and barked something at him. He then pointed at Glorietta and gave instructions. The interpreter went on quickly:

"We wish to say that we shall now be forced to ask you and the Englishman to stay in this room for a short time, after which you shall both be free to go where you like. I am sure the Englishman will not be sorry to be with you, señorita." As he spoke these last words, with a leer of gallantry, the interpreter turned slyly and saw that the other man had gone. Relieved of his companion, he seemed to become bolder at once. He took a few uncertain steps toward the young woman, and his breath, preceding him, announced clearly what Glorietta had already suspected, from his prattle—that he had been drinking heavily. He came toward her, and as she shrank back, he caught her, not roughly, by the arm and stuck the lantern up to her face.

"Ah," slobbered the speaker—and as the rays of the lamp fell partly upon him Glorietta saw that he was dressed in the garb of a priest—"ah, the señorita is really beautiful! It is a pity to keep her in such a place." He thrust his face up to hers, probably with no worse intent than to babble a soft nothing into her ear; but Glorietta,

her nerves worn thin, did not wait to learn his intentions. It was bad policy, no doubt, in such a situation as she and the Major were in, but she was completely revolted by the tipsy creature. She stepped back and swung a hearty right fist smack against the fat jaw.

"Ay, ay!" groaned the man, almost dropping the lantern as he staggered back. "She-devil! You have broken my jaw! I will——"

But the other man returned suddenly, took in the situation at a glance, and seized his companion by the nape of the neck, at the same time taking the lantern from him. "*Bobo!*" he spat out fiercely. He cuffed the other man with exactly the same nonchalance as that with which a cat punishes her kittens when they have been unruly. This done, he bowed low, with his hand on his breast, to the young woman, said something in Spanish, and though she did not understand the words, the import was clear. He was apologizing for his companion's rudeness. This done, he sent the babbler to bring the Major. Glorietta heard a fumbling, as of a key in a rusty lock, and then the sound of Poulson's voice came to her. In another moment the Major, rubbing his eyes, came into the room.

"Glorietta!" was his first utterance. "I can't see you; this light blinds me. Are you here?"

"Here, Sidney!" She came forward and grasped both his hands. He gave them a little squeeze. Then he turned to the two men and began to speak in Spanish. Glorietta knew what he was saying. He was calling down upon their heads the anathema of the British Empire, and including sundry threats of what would happen to their captors when he was able to reach the nearest consul. In reply, all he got was a sardonic grin from Señor Juan Corcega, the bigger and fatter of the two bandits.

"By George, that was silly of me, Glorietta!" grumbled the Major. "There's no use threatening these ruffians. They've got the whip hand, and they're in the wildest part of Spain. The whole British army couldn't turn them out of this wilderness. They couldn't find them. Wait, I can do better than that!"

The Major's voice suddenly became extremely dulcet and cajoling. He delivered himself of a discourse which, whether it was grammatical or not, was clearly understood by Corcega, who nodded good-naturedly throughout the harangue.

"*Bueno!*" said the fat man simply, when the Major had finished; and immediately he went out, hauled his companion with him unceremoniously, and shut the door. A grating noise indicated that the door was locked.

"Oh, Sidney!" gasped Glorietta, "there was just a moment, there, when I think you could have knocked them both down. I would have helped you."

"I thought of it myself," replied the Major drily, "but I saw something just in time which you probably didn't see. All the time I was talking, the bigger brute had his hand on his knife. Ugh! These fellows are deadly with the *cuchillo*, Glorietta. At close range, even a pistol isn't much good against them. Confound the brutes, they can't use firearms well, and they haven't the least notion of how to use their fists, but their knife work is appalling. No, it would have been suicide. And a foolish suicide, because I believe they really mean to do us no harm. The fat swine admitted everything, coolly enough, with that one word of his. I charged him with being every sort of crook in the calendar, and told him we knew his game perfectly—to hold us locked up until they finish with your father——"

"But did you tell them my father hasn't any money?" burst in Glorietta anxiously.

"No. I didn't know it to be a fact—though it probably is—and besides, they'll find out the truth soon enough. At any rate, we know now that your father, without a doubt, is in Teruel, and probably he isn't far from us at this minute. I was wondering, though——"

"What they'll say when they find that Father is not a rich dupe?"

"Yes, something like that. That's the only thing to fear. I don't know just how bad these ruffians are. I fancy they wouldn't care to swing on a provincial gibbet. But——"

"They have brainstorms," she supplied.

"Yes, something like that."

Glorietta sighed. Then the Major, reaching out in the dark and finding one of her hands, pressed it encouragingly and said: "I suppose we'd better be sitting down, hadn't we? I'm sorry I can't offer you a chair. The apartment is not well furnished yet. You see I'm buying my furniture on the pay-out-of-income plan, and I haven't any income."

"Sidney—you're a wonder. You can actually joke about it! Oh, I'm so glad you're here with me! I couldn't have borne it another minute, alone."

The Major affected not to hear, but went on gaily, "Lacking chairs, I can offer you some very good straw. It has a doubtful odour, but it's that sort of straw, you know—Spanish straw. Spain is a wonderful country for odours. For example——"

"Listen!"

A heavy door had creaked protestingly, and afterward slammed. Very faintly there came to the two pairs of alert ears the sound of voices—one voice in particular being

higher pitched than the others. The sounds seemed to move along, then ceased; then renewed from another quarter. Then they ceased.

After a silence, Glorietta said, disappointed, "They've gone."

"Umph," said the Major.

"What were you thinking of, Sidney?" she ventured, laying a hand on his arm.

"I was thinking about that Canadian ex-service man I almost sold the lot in Bellemary to. It's just come to me who his people were, in North Devon——"

"Wait!" whispered Glorietta. She stretched out at full length, and listened at the crack along the partition. In a moment she clutched Poulson excitedly. "Get down here, Sidney, and listen. Tell me what you hear—I don't dare trust my own ears."

A few moments afterward the Major whispered back: "That's your father's voice. By George, he's in the next room, with those two scoundrels!"

"Yes, that's my father! Oh, Sidney, grab me and keep me from screaming! It's Dad! In the very next room! And I can't reach him!"

"Easy, little woman," was the reply. "*Paciencia y barajar!* Don't make a sound. Your father will take care of himself."

Stretched out at full length on the straw, the man and woman, with an ear at that narrow slit which was made by the falling away of a sill board, heard the commanding voice of Colonel Erskine Fenimore:

"Now, gentlemen, I don't see what all this darned mysteriousness is about. Seems to me we could have been just as comfortable back there in Barcelony. But if you want to come down to business—get to it!"

CHAPTER XVI

SINCE leaving Barcelona, Colonel Fenimore had become less and less enamoured of Spain with every mile he travelled and every day he spent. There is much of fascinating antiquity and Oriental colour in Spain, but the Colonel was not a fancier of anything more ancient than the good five-cent cigars of 1896. In general, the Colonel was pleased with open plumbing, granolithic sidewalks, quick telephone service, and that more nebulous thing that the Colonel called "service." All these were conspicuous by their absence, after Barcelona was left behind. Instead of these, the Colonel discovered that rural Spain possesses the largest variety of unpleasant insects and the weirdest collection of smells to be found on our planet. Also, the food, in which there was a liberal amount of garlic and considerable frying in doubtful olive oil, wore on him. He began to feel that all was not well somewhere between his tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

Additionally, the Colonel began to suspect that the process of acquiring the fortune of the late Señor de Santa Clara and the guardianship of the Rose of Aragon was not as simple as he had hoped. The sudden flight to Teruel, the atmosphere of stealthy secrecy, and the evident desire of his guide, the priest, to keep under cover would have warned a less optimistic gentleman than the Colonel that the cards had not been all put on the table.

When Colonel Fenimore and the priest arrived in Teruel, they did not go to a hotel, as the American expected. No,

there were reasons why it would not be politic. Instead, accommodations had been arranged in a private house in the new part of the city—that is to say, that part which lies outside the old fortifications. The house was fairly clean, but bare; and one night on the bed which was given him made the Colonel long to see his favourite mattress in Los Angeles again. The house seemed to be conducted by an ugly old female who stared horribly; and there was a good deal of going and coming on the part of men who looked villainous to the American's eyes, though they were perhaps respectable enough in fact.

All things considered, the Colonel was glad when "the showdown," as he called it, came.

With much ceremony, the priest came to the Colonel, about mid-afternoon, and told him to get ready to come to the place where the transaction was to be consummated. The priest had been showing a degree of interest in the Colonel's large Gladstone bag which worried the latter gentleman. Once, on entering his room, he thought he heard somebody scamper out at another door; and whereas the Colonel felt sure he had left the bag behind a chair, he discovered it, on his entrance, just below a window that looked out upon a portico roof. Over and over again the priest had asked, fixing his eyes piercingly upon the Colonel's face: "You are sure you are able to financialize this matter?" The agent dwelt lovingly upon this word "financialize," as most people do when they discover a foreign word that does not exist.

Each time, the Colonel nodded, but his nods were less and less happy. A few hours before the time came to close the deal, the Colonel was in a clear funk and would have fled for America, hat and bag, except for one thing. He was now short of funds. Somehow, expenses had run ahead of

his expectations. Money had always leaked away from him incontinently, and it was no different in Spain than in America. So he took several long breaths, braced himself with the hope that all would come right, and followed his guide toward that unknown place where he should talk business.

The unknown place proved to be the least desirable in which the Colonel had ever practised commerce. First they drove a long distance from the boarding house and into a country which seemed to Fenimore, as it had seemed to his daughter and the Major, a fine location for a hold-up. The Colonel clung to his bag and hoped harder. It came cloudy, and the gloom of the surroundings was accentuated. Finally, they arrived at a deserted shepherd's hut, where the Colonel was bidden to make himself at home, until his guide could get in touch with the principal through whom the business was to be done. The Colonel was thus left alone, in this wilderness, for nearly two hours. He spent the time wishing that he were at the corner of Fifth and Spring streets, Los Angeles, and feeling at his collar, and wondering how thin worry had made him in the past few days.

At last, it was dark. The guide returned and motioned the Colonel to follow him. He could not see the path, and stumbled along over stones and roots until they arrived at their destination. "We are here!" exclaimed the guide. "Please to walk within!" The Colonel walked within what seemed, so far as he could make out, to be a warehouse, and was introduced into a room, straw-covered, with several barrels strewn about, an improvised table in the centre, on which were two tallow candles shedding a garish light. Another man, unknown to the Colonel, had joined them outside and entered with them. The priest now introduced

the third man. "Señor Felipe Garcigoya—Colonel Fenimore." Then he explained to the Colonel: "This gentleman does not speak English. I will tell you what he says, and I will tell him what you say."

"All right, all right," grumbled the Colonel, staring around into the gloom. "But you can ask him first, for me, what the dickens all this monkey business is about? Looks to me as though we could have talked business in some office, somewhere, without coming out here like a lot of crooks."

The priest translated the remark. The piggish eyes of the other man showed no emotion, but he waved a hand and retorted: "Tell the American gentleman we *are* suspect. We must be careful. Does he not understand that Señor de Santa Clara was a fraudulent bankrupt, and this money which he has on certificate of deposit in the United States should have been used to settle his debts? Tell him that, if this transaction comes to the police, we shall all be put in prison. Is he a fool that he does not understand that?"

When the words were interpreted, the Colonel shivered. He had not thought of the matter in just that light. His thinking in the matter, indeed, had been incomplete, as it sometimes was when he needed money. He really had not thought of Santa Clara as a fraud—that is a harsh word—but as a man in trouble—er—possibly a man trying to—er—make the best of a business crash. It was too late to consider, now. He swallowed hard and replied: "I understand."

"Señor Garcigoya has the bag here," went on the interpreter, "which contains the secret pocket with the certificates of deposit. We have obtained this bag at great trouble from the court official who had it in charge, on

promise to pay him from what you shall give us. Do you understand?"

"Yes. But where is the gentleman's daughter—the Rose of Aragon?"

"She will be in Teruel to-morrow. We trust you not to run away with these checks, leaving the poor lady in poverty."

"I wouldn't do that," said the Colonel quickly.

"No, the señor is a good man. We know that." Suddenly the third man leaned over and pounded his fist on the table so sharply that the candles tottered, and the Colonel nearly went backward from his barrel. The owner of the big fist spoke in Spanish peremptorily.

"He wants you now to show the money!" said the interpreter.

Luckily, the three men, engaged with their business, did not hear the little "oh!" that was uttered by a young woman lying on the floor of the next room, with her ear at a slim aperture, drinking in every word and syllable. They could not, of course, see the man who was near her, nor see him reach out and touch the young woman meaningly.

"Oh, what do you suppose they will do when they know?" whispered Glorietta, in that next room.

"Quiet, quiet," whispered back the Major. "Don't worry."

The Colonel fumbled his watch chain nervously and coughed. Then he said, regaining his old commanding tone: "I told you I had something just as good as money. Yes, and better! You may never have heard of me, but you can ask anybody west of the Mississippi who I am. Feni-

more—why, everybody in Southern California knows Fenimore! I've got the daisiest little real-estate development on the Coast, understand; why, in a few years it'll be a hive of industry and a heaven of homes——"

"By George, I remember that line!" whispered Major Poulson, in the next room. In turn, Glorietta punched *him* into silence.

"Well, now you know who I am," went on the Colonel. "I says to myself, when I got this letter from Santa Clara, says I, 'I can help this gentleman out and help myself to some of the capital I need to put my development over.' Understand? I said that to myself, like that! I says, 'I'll put a block of stock in my development against that gentleman's tied-up fortune, and, after we get the money on those certificates of deposit, if they don't want to hold the stock, I'll buy it back.' But my advice, gentlemen, is to hold that stock. In five years that stock——"

The man with the piglike eyes uttered an imprecation and laid his fist on the table again.

"He wants to know why you don't show the money?" suggested the priest.

"Not money. Stock!" said the Colonel. "Thirty thousand dollars' worth of stock in the Bellemary Development Incorporated—and I've got ten thousand more to put on top of that, if you haven't any courage!"

"Stock, stock, stock!" repeated the man with the fist. "What is this word *stock?*"

"It is an English word—it means—I have heard of live stock—cattle—horses," explained the bewildered priest. "He speaks so fast I cannot follow him. It is about his *stock.*"

"Look it up in your dictionary, fool!" commanded the leader.

Colonel Fenimore gazed curiously while the interpreter thumbed a pocket dictionary—English-Spanish—unhandily.

"It means, it means a bird with long legs," he stammered. "Ah, no, señor! That is another word. It means—ah, as I said!—cattle and sheep. *Alivestock.* Cattle and sheep."

The other Spaniard shook his head in amazement. "You are a fool, Urbano. Always a fool. First you say he possesses birds with long legs and then cattle. You do not understand! Oh, if only that clever young Arturo Cervello were here! He could understand!"

At that moment the body of Glorietta Fenimore, in the next room, twitched violently. She understood only the words "Arturo Cervello," but that was enough. Those two words sank into her heart like two knives, and she felt crushed, humiliated to sickness. It *was* Cervello, then, without the shadow of doubt, who had deliberately led them into a trap! There seemed little doubt of it before. There was no doubt of it now. He was a member of the Spanish Prisoner gang!

If Major Poulson, lying near ner, had heard, he gave no sign. No sign, at least, that the young woman, in the darkness, could know. But if she had been able to see, she would have known that Poulson's fingers clenched and his teeth gritted.

Judging from the tone of the leader's voice, Garcigoya—as the priest had called him—was becoming impatient. He uttered that favourite oath of the low-class Spaniard—that exclamation terminating in "*ajo*"—several times and bawled to his interpreter: "Tell him to show us the money. We have no time to waste. Birds with long legs are all very well, but we want to see his cash. Tell him to open his bag

and show us! Make it plain to him, Urbano, that we will stand no nonsense."

"The señor asks me to tell you, Señor Fenimore, that he wishes you to produce the thirty thousand dollars in money you have brought. He says we are in great hurry and he will stand no tricks. You had better open your bag."

"Thirty thousand dollars in money!" exclaimed the Colonel. "I did not say I had thirty thousand dollars in money. I will show you the stock—endorsed in blank—and I will make it payable to anyone you name. Of course, I don't hand it over till I see those certificates of deposit in your suitcase. That's fair, I guess." The Colonel opened his bag and took out a bundle of crisp paper, which crackled authoritatively as he unfolded one of the certificates. "There!" said the Colonel, beaming upon his Bellemary stock with the eye of a proud parent, "I guess that's as nice a proposition as you ever saw. Here's the blueprint of the development. Those corner lots ought to sell for fifty thousand dollars apiece—those in the business district—when we get our stride. Every ten cents you put into Bellemary is a baby dollar."

In the uncertain light, the man called Garcigoya leaned over, with a lapsed jaw, staring at the blueprint spread out on the table by the Colonel. "Sainted Virgin!" he cried, "what does it mean? What is that blue paper? What are those parchments? Can that be money, Urbano? I have never seen any money like that. Yet it has a great eagle at the top, and we know that American money bears eagles sometimes."

"It is not money. It is what he calls *stock*," insisted the priest.

"Stock! Stock—you will drive me crazy with your ignorance!"

"I am doing all I can," grumbled the priest. "I cannot make sense where there is no sense, Señor Juan. He says that this blue paper means stock which will be worth fifty thousand dollars as soon as he catches up in his walk. Every fifty centimo piece is a five peseta piece, just being born. The good Lord only knows what that can mean, but so the gentleman has said."

"Ask him can't he understand plain language!" said the Colonel to the interpreter impatiently. "Ask him if he never saw the plan of a great and growing real-estate development. Land, land! Can't you understand that? Listen, gentlemen: if you had put one thousand dollars into Los Angeles real estate twenty-five years ago, you'd be worth half a million to-day. That is, if you picked the right place. Now, Bellemary is going to be another Los Angeles on a small scale. Can't you understand that?"

The interpreter blinked. Then he said to his leader: "I understand his words, but they mean nothing, Señor Juan. I begin to believe that the gentleman is afflicted in his head. He wants us to believe that this blue paper is land—earth—streets and buildings. He is speaking of angels, also, which is a bad sign. The angels, he says, would have made you rich if you had given them a thousand American dollars twenty-five years ago. Can it be, Señor Juan, that the man is religiously mad?"

The fat man with the piggish eyes jumped up and stamped his exasperation, swinging his short but powerful arms like windmills. He roared like a bull and cursed like three pirates. "I am tired of this foolishness!" he cried to Urbano. Then, striding over to the astonished Colonel, he shook a great fist under the developer's nose and uttered the four English words of his vocabulary:

"All right! Queeck! Money!"

"Here! What are you doing? I thought I was dealing with gentlemen!" cried the astonished Colonel Fenimore, springing up and shrinking toward the wall. "Listen, both of you! I don't want any fists shook under my nose, do you understand? If you can't deal like gentlemen should, then I call it all off. Listen, now, if you can understand anything in a Christian language: Mr. Santa Clara left a couple of certificates of deposit in a bag, you claim. He has a daughter, who you say is a nice girl, and you wanted someone to take care of her, like she should be cared for? Ain't that right? Well, I come over here all this distance from Los Angeles and offer you a business proposition as clean as a hound's tooth. I tell you further I'm prepared to see that Miss Santa Clara is married, if she wants to get married, into one of the very nicest families in the States. Not only that, but I can double the money that comes to her, out of what her father left, inside of five years. You'll never get a better chance than this. If you want to square yourself with the officers of the court, you can slip them a few shares of this stock, which will put them on easy street——"

"Sainted Virgin!" yelled the fat leader of the Spanish Prisoner company, "my head is splitting! Stop him, Urbano! Tell him to stop that noise. God himself would not know what he is talking about. For once, I think you are right. The gentleman is mad—raving lunatic. He understands nothing. He says, *stock*, *stock*, *stock*—like a clock ticking in an empty room—and *stock* means birds on long legs or cattle, or the devil knows what!"

"What shall I do, Señor Juan?" asked Urbano darkly.

"How do I know? The madman has driven my brains out of my head! Rummage in his bag and see if he has money,

in spite of this prattle. Do it now! If he resists, I will take care of him."

The priest leaped for the Colonel's bag. The Colonel shouted, "You leave that alone!" but the glimpse of a murderous-looking knife which the fatter man had whipped out of his *faja* stopped Mr. Fenimore short. He jumped back, crying: "I forbid—don't you dare—you'll pay for this——"

"He has nothing!" announced the priest, in disgust, after tossing the contents of the Colonel's bag in all directions. "I can see nothing. He is crazy, as I told you!" The interpreter used the word "*loco*"—and it happened that this word was one with which the Colonel had long been familiar, since it is used commonly in the central West of America.

"Crazy, am I?" cried the Colonel, drawing himself up in wounded dignity. "Well, I should say——"

What Colonel Erskine Fenimore should or should not have said will forever remain unknown in Spain, for he suddenly stopped speaking, his mouth remaining wide open. The Colonel was facing the door; the other men were facing the Colonel. The Colonel suddenly saw the door of the room swing open, and a tall man, clean-shaven, very erect and with gleaming eyes, appeared. He held a pistol at arm's length. . . .

"What is happening? Somebody else is speaking in Spanish!" whispered Glorietta to Major Poulson, in the next room.

"Wait! Don't make a noise. I'll tell you," was the reply. "He says—wait—it's the Jefe! He says—he has come—to place them under arrest!"

It was, indeed, the Jefe de policia of Barcelona. There was somebody else behind him, to whom he said, quickly:

"Stand here! See that nobody gets out!" Then the Jefe shouted in clear tones:

"Juan Corcega, I arrest you in the name of the King and the police authority, for larceny. Urbano Balmes, I arrest you for the same offence. Do not move, or I will kill you where you stand! Señor Fenimore, go outside! Wait for me."

"I have done nothing, Señor Jefe," Balmes began to whine. "I have done nobody any harm. I was merely——"

"Shut your mouth!" ordered the Jefe. "You have a knife in your *faja*, Balmes. Throw it on the floor! Take off your *faja*, also!"

"We have done nothing," said Juan Corcega stolidly. "You are wrong, Señor Jefe. You must be looking for some other men. What is this larceny we are charged with?"

"For months I have been trying to catch you in the act, Corcega," was the reply. "You know well enough. Take that knife out and throw it on the floor. Quick! or I will fill your carcass full of lead!"

Sullenly the big man took his knife and let it fall through his fingers, to his feet.

"Not there! Kick it away!" shouted the Jefe.

Corcega made a move as though to kick the knife. Instead, with a tremendous spring, he knocked the barrels from beneath the improvised table top, sending the candles and the lantern flying. The room went dark. The pistol cracked once—and then there was a cry of pain. To the listening ears in the adjoining room, it seemed as though several men were scuffling at the doorway whence Colonel Fenimore had just gone out. The air sizzled with oaths. The word "*traitor*"—traitor—crackled out—then another sharp cry of pain. Then all was quiet.

"My father had already got away, don't you think, Sidney?" panted Glorietta, rising.

"I think so. There's the devil to pay! Somebody got hurt. I can hear him moaning softly in there. Gad, we must get out of here and lend a hand! I'll try that door again!"

CHAPTER XVII

"IT'S no use!" said the Major bitterly, after frantically clutching at every part of the door without finding a grip for his fingers. "This old Spanish oak is like s eel, and there isn't a cleat or a knothole I can find. If the room had been built for a prison cell, it couldn't have been more efficacious. If we only had one of those barrels that are in the next room, I could reach the window. Isn't there a single thing in this dungeon I can stand on?"

They groped around, bumping into each other several times, but finding absolutely no object except a small wooden bucket in one corner; and this, kiln-dry with age, fell apart in Poulson's hands when he lifted it.

"Of course, they'll be back after us," remarked Glorietta, after a dull pause. "The Jefe must have known we were here. Or, at least, wouldn't he have suspected it?"

"I don't see how," was the blunt answer. "Unless our good friends, the jailbirds, tell him. And I fancy they're too busy, one way or another, to do much talking. When morning comes, there'll be a little light here. Then, perhaps, we can find a way out."

"Are you sure you couldn't reach that window by jumping, Sidney?"

"I'll try. Let's see, it was—where was it?—I'll follow the wall along. It ought to be five or six feet from the corner, on that side." In the dark, Glorietta heard her companion leap several times and fall back with a dull thud. Then she heard him say: "No use! I can't make it. I think there's a

ledge there, but my fingers barely touch it. If it were only daylight!—Is it my imagination, Glorietta, or do I hear somebody groan now and then?"

"I'll listen at that crack again," said the young woman. Then, after a silence, she said chokingly: "I don't hear anything, Sidney—but—perhaps—you'd better get down there and——"

"What is it?" asked the man, quickly sensing some new source of trouble in Glorietta's stifled utterance.

"I—thought—I smelled smoke."

"Good God! I hope not!" cried Poulson, throwing himself on the floor.

"Do—you get—that odour?" asked Glorietta.

"Glorietta—come over here. This way! Let me take your hands. Listen. I don't know what our fate is going to be, but we mustn't lose our heads now! I'm afraid you're right. It smells like straw burning. Those rotters have overthrown the lantern or whatever lights they had and—it may have ignited the—the straw. I can't believe they deliberately—no—no human beings, even half-civilized, would do that! There *is* somebody in that room, I'm sure—and he's alive. I caught a faint groan as I smelled that smoke."

"You've got to reach that window, somehow, now," said the woman. "Couldn't you reach it if you stood on my shoulders, Sidney?"

"Even if I reach it—the bars——"

"But you must try."

"I'm too heavy. You couldn't stand my weight, Glorietta. But if you think—I'll pull off my boots——"

"There's no time for that, Sidney. Come quick. I can stand it. I must. Follow along the wall till we come to that spot again."

They groped their way along, once more, to the corner.

"It's about five feet from this corner, Glorietta," Poulson announced. "I'll raise you up, first, till you can reach the bars. You can judge how strong and well set they may be."

"We'd be losing time, Sidney. That's no use. I smell smoke strongly now. Can't you?"

"Yes. There's no doubt about it. There's a fire in the next room. Well, we must make a try for it. Stand as firm as you can, Glorietta. Lean your weight against the wall."

"I'm braced. Let me get hold of your foot——"

"Gad, Glory, you never can do it——"

"Yes, I can. Don't be afraid. I'll stand it as long as I can. Now—up!"

With the horrible sensation that his boots were grinding into her delicate flesh, Poulson managed to climb up on the woman's shoulders. She swayed unsteadily, but he felt her body grow taut as she braced herself with hands outstretched against the cold stone wall, damp and slippery to the touch.

"I've got a hold! I can ease up my weight now!" shouted the Major. "There is a ledge, about six inches wide, here. But not wide enough for me to perch on. The bars—they're firm—firm, Glorietta. There are—six bars! Can you stand it if I put my strength on them?"

"I can stand anything! Go ahead, Sidney! This smoke is beginning to choke me." She shuddered under his weight, and he knew she was trying to keep back a cough.

In order to exert his full strength upon the bars, Poulson had to use her shoulders as a fulcrum. He had no leverage without. It turned him sick as he realized that every move of his body must be sending the most acute pain through the poor body beneath him. But he put the thought of it resolutely out of his mind and struggled with the bars. Once he felt her grow limp under him, and he clung for a

half minute to the window, releasing her of his weight as much as possible. Then she recovered her strength, and he began to work again.

"I can't bend them, Glorietta!" he shouted. "But the wood at the base of them seems to be rotted a little. One of them is giving slightly. Can you stand it a little longer?"

"I—I——" was all he heard, but the lithe figure grew more rigid under his weight, and he knew that she was responding to his words.

"I can give you another rest. I'll pull myself up a bit," were his next words.

"No!" came the faint answer. Poulson knew what she meant, this time. She couldn't gather up her strength again if she gave way now. So he put all his strength into one last powerful wrench.

"Got it!" he cried. "I've loosened one bar! We're saved if you can hang on another minute, Glorietta!"

There was no answer except a tearing cough and a convulsion which nearly threw him from his position. Once more he lunged at the bars, and felt the girl literally shake under his effort. Then, with a cry of victory, Poulson shouted: "I've got it! I——" The smoke in his nose and throat checked his words. But his weight was suddenly released from Glorietta, who fell forward against the wall, limp and trembling.

The next thing the young woman knew, her hands were suddenly seized. She heard, even from that distance, Poulson's heart thumping. His hot breath came down to her, and she heard just one syllable: "Come!" And she only half-realized, in her fainting condition, that the Major was hanging down, above her, head down. He had managed to draw himself upward, balance himself on the narrow ledge, turn upon it, and get one leg across the sill. He had then

reached down and failed to find her. So, twisting his legs around each of the end bars, he threw himself backward—and caught her hands. She felt herself being drawn upward—the smoke got into her lungs—she gasped for breath—and then she lost consciousness for a time. But it must have been only for a few seconds, for she suddenly felt a refreshing current of air sweep over her.

"Glorietta! My wonderful girl!"

"Yes. Yes, Sidney!" she replied vaguely.

"I'm holding you! Are you all right again? You're all right, now! You can't drop back! You're between the bars. Do you understand?"

"Yes." This came weakly.

"I don't know how far it is to drop. I can't hold on much longer, out here. It can't be far to the ground. I've dropped my knife, and I heard it strike quickly. Are you strong enough to have me let you down?"

"I think so."

"Then grip my hands tightly. I'll get a hold, as I did on the other side of the bars, and hang downward again. Take my hands, and don't let go till I tell you. Slide off the window ledge as gently as you can, but once you begin to go, fall limp. I can hold you, if the bars hold, and I think they will."

In those terrible moments when Glorietta was supporting not only his weight, but treble his weight, Poulson had managed to force two of the bars from their places in the wood, at the bottom of the window. Fortunately, the weather, even in dry Aragon, had in the course of years rotted the solid oak in which the ends of the bars were embedded. Across this ledge, and in the place where the two bars had been forced upward, the body of the girl was lying. How he had managed to get her half through the

window and sustain himself on the narrow ledge outside, Poulson never afterward was able to imagine. The ledge was not more than six inches wide on either side of the bars. Upon that ledge, holding the remaining bars with one hand, and pulling Glorietta with the other, he had managed to turn and cling. And, to get out, he must have forced himself over her inert body—for this was exactly the period when consciousness had left her.

"I'm ready," she said, gripping his hands. Though they could see nothing, they knew that smoke was pouring through the window, now, all around them. Again, Poulson got the lower part of his legs between the remaining bars, and let himself down as far as he could. "Now!" She slid and wormed herself across the ledge until only her knees were left upon it. Then she fell, head first. Down she went, turning over in the air, until her fall was suddenly stopped when she went the full length of her own and Poulson's arms. She hung there in midair for a moment, swaying first against the wall and then away from it. In that instant she wondered, but peculiarly, in a detached way, how far she was from the ground. If the stone warehouse happened to be built on the edge of a decline—at the bottom of which was one of those rocky creeks such as they had followed up from Teruel . . . if it did . . . but somehow she did not feel great concern. After that choking smoke and the horrible prospect of being roasted alive, nothing else seemed to matter.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

He let her go, and she fell not more than two yards, landed on her feet, and sat down abruptly. "It's only a short distance, Sidney," she shouted up to him, when she got her breath. As she looked up, she saw another window,

just like the one they had crawled through, at the right. It looked like a red Japanese lantern, with vertical black stripes across it, gleaming in a halo of smoke.

"Stand away from the wall, please!" came Paulson's voice from above her—and she scrambled back, still with her eyes fixed, fascinated, upon that red Japanese lantern. By its light she could now see the Major, dimly. She saw him raise himself up, untwine his legs, let himself down against the face of the building, and drop. He, too, fell when he struck the ground, and immediately afterward uttered a sharp grunt of pain.

"You're not hurt, Sidney?" Glorietta cried, rushing to him.

"N–no. It's that Belgian leg of mine. It's still sensitive. No—I'm all right." He rose unsteadily and tried to walk. "By George, it hurts," he exclaimed.

"But we're safe, Sidney. We're safe! I don't know how you did it. You are wonderful!"

"Don't know how *I* did it! You're jesting, Glory. I don't know how *you* did it. But—we're not done yet!"

The Major began to limp painfully along the side of the structure. It was lighter now. A flame had suddenly shot up through the roof and had begun to crackle eagerly.

"Where are you going?" cried Glorietta, following him.

"To the door where they brought us in," was the reply. "I'm certain there's someone in there, wounded. There's a chance to save him yet!"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE storehouse—if that was what the building really was, in which Glorietta and the Major had been imprisoned—was built upon the side of a gently sloping hill. The shorter side was on a rude ox-cart road, and the main entrance was there. It was from the rear window that they had dropped, which accounted for the relatively longer distance to the ground.

The light that now soared upward from the roof gave intermittent views of the surroundings. It was sufficient to indicate the way toward the front. Indeed, there was a flight of what must have been steps, at one time, now overgrown with vegetation. This path led around the side of the structure and to the roadway above.

By the time they reached the road, it was apparent to Glorietta that her companion was hobbling painfully. From the great doorway, which had been left wide open in the flight of the pursued and pursuers, the smoke was already rolling out in billows, though with no flame visible. The sturdy construction of the building was evidently holding the fire temporarily confined to that one room and the roof above it. But the crackling of the roof timbers loudly announced the dryness of the woodwork and the quickly impending fate of the structure.

"I think I can make it! I'll keep as near the floor as possible," said the Major, whipping off his coat.

"Please don't try it, Sidney!" begged Glorietta, seizing

her companion by the arm. "It's no use. You'll be suffocated in that smoke. It's terrible to think of anybody being in there, but you can't throw your life away."

"I don't think it's your father," said Poulson, with sincere conviction. "I'm certain he got out. But even if it is one of those blackguards—gad, you can't leave even a dog in a place like that, if he can be taken out. I won't take any unnecessary chances, Glorietta, but I've got to make a try for it!" And before the woman could utter a further protest, Poulson had thrown himself upon all fours and disappeared in the smoke.

The Major had reasoned the situation of the burning room accurately. He remembered that, when he was taken from that same room himself and placed in the room with Glorietta, the feeble light from the lantern had reflected upon a wall at the right of the door where he came out. Consequently, that must have been the side of the building. So, then, whatever rooms there were lay between the main entrance and that first cell he had occupied, and they were on the rear side. He assumed that, from the size of the rooms and the shape of the building, there were probably just two pairs of rooms, one pair on each side of a main corridor. This proved correct. And following this reasoning, the Major crept along on the right-hand side of the corridor as he went in.

His first sensation was not, as he expected, the entrance of smoke into his lungs, but a wave of stale air, so heavy that it was difficult to take a breath. "They would have left the door of that room open," Poulson argued, as he crept along. "If I find nobody near that doorway, I can crawl back quickly. It would be no use to go on." Already the smoke was tinged with yellow, and the odour was that of damp hay, smouldering.

With a hand trailing along upon the wall at his right, the Major crawled for some twenty feet, holding his breath as long as he could, and keeping his nostrils near to the floor. It was only a short distance, but he made slow progress because he dared not take a deep breath, nor any breath at all, without putting his face practically against the earth. His leg ached horribly. He was quite sure it was not broken, but it seemed to have no strength in it.

All at once the hand that was following the wall slipped inward. He knew that he had found the doorway. He hesitated for a second, and then, fearing to rise, or to go into the room, he lay on his stomach and reached in as far as he could—floundering ridiculously like a boy trying to swim for the first time. The heat was terrific now, and he fancied that his own hair was being singed. He could not open his eyes. Then, as he groped around, his fingers touched something. It felt like cloth. He made another effort, and seized the cloth, and pulled. The thing moved slightly. He pulled again, as hard as he could, in that prostrate attitude, and moved the object a few inches. Then, frantically, he began to drag it toward him. . . .

Glorietta, outside, had seen the figure of the Major disappear within the smoke, and her heart sagged. She knew, from report, that once the smoke got fairly into a person's lungs, he was powerless to help himself. It seemed utter madness for the Major to attempt this rescue, even if it were a rescue, and yet her whole body tingled with admiration, with appalled appreciation of the man's courage.

If it were her own father, in there! Her mind automatically closed itself to the idea. It was too awful. It might be so, but she could not believe it—she would not let herself consider it. The Major clearly thought the Colonel had

gone out with the first outburst of the scuffle. Who, then, could remain? If they were really moans that Poulson had heard, they could be those of either one of the blackguards, or the Jefe, or someone who accompanied the Jefe. In any case, it was horrible to think of a human being remaining in that place, which would be a furnace in a few minutes more. But it ran through her mind repeatedly: "What should even a brave man do in such a case? Should he risk his own life when the chance of saving another is so slim?"

"Bless his great soul," cried Glorietta, aloud. "Sidney Poulson never could ask himself such a question! He *had* to go! But——"

Glorietta was flicked by a whip of heat, and drew back from the side of the doorway. She fixed her eyes on that spot where the Major had disappeared, and waited. Every moment dragged itself out to its last fraction. "He can't survive in that smoke," the girl sobbed. "One, two, three" —she found herself counting, counting without regard to the space of time between the numerals—just counting— "one, two, three, four." There came to her mind the time her brother Freddie, not an excellent swimmer, then, had dived into a swimming pool to see how long he could remain under water. She recalled that sick feeling she had undergone as the seconds ticked off and he did not reappear. "Will he come up? Did he strike his head when he dived?" She remembered running feverishly around and around the pool, wondering whether to jump in after him. It was like that. . . .

"Will he come back? Can he come back?" Glorietta kept repeating, half-fainting. She had no conception of the time that had elapsed, but it seemed a half hour. And then, as

her eyes strained themselves at the spot where Poulson had disappeared, something white appeared, shrouded in the smoke. It flickered before her eyes a moment, and disappeared. She threw herself upon the mirage—and grabbed it. It was an arm.

"My dear God!" cried the girl, with such a fervency of gratitude as she had never known, and without realizing what she was doing, she began to tug at the arm. The next thing she distinctly realized was that the arm rose in her grasp, and a figure loomed before her eyes. It was the Major, and he had something in his grip. He floundered out of the smoke as far as he could, and fell.

For a full minute, both the Major and his burden lay quiet. All Glorietta heard was a harsh gasping, as of someone trying to drink deeply of the air. She knelt down beside the two figures. It was lighter now. She could not see the Major's face, because he was face downward, but a beam of light showed the features of the rescued man in clear relief. Stupefied, Glorietta stared into the face of Arturo Cervello!

"I'm—right! Come—away—farther—too—h-hot here!" the woman heard the Major saying, as he rose, choking and gasping. "Help me pull him along. Too weak!"

She had to drag them both out of the widening radius of the heat—across the road, and up a slight slope, among some of the leathery-leaved scrubby bushes known in Aragon as *monte-bajo*. For several minutes, there was not a word spoken. The Major stared stupidly at the burning storehouse, as though he were slightly demented, or were awakening from a sleep. Glorietta looked from the face of one of the men to the other, both now clearly seen in the towering glare.

"Major!" she cried abruptly. "Sidney! Are you all right? You look strange! Look at me!"

"Yes, I'm all right," he replied dully. "I was nearly done for, though. Another minute would have—been enough. Is he dead?"

"I don't know." Her concern had been for the Major rather than for his burden. Even now, though she felt surprisingly little bitterness toward Cervello, it seemed of little moment. At least, his poor young body had not been cruelly burned! She seemed to think no further than that. But the question came to her—"Does Sidney know whom he has saved?"

"It is Arturo Cervello, Sidney!" she gasped.

"Yes," was the even reply. "I know. I saw his face in a flare of light. The poor devil. I hope they didn't kill him. Somehow, I don't hate him so much now—though I ought to hate him worse. Either the Jefe shot him or he was stabbed in the dark by one of those ruffians. We'd better see if he is alive. He was face down in the straw, near the door, or he would have been suffocated, anyway."

Cervello was still living, they found. In the light of the fire, Poulson, after making sure that the young man's heart was beating, began coolly to search for a wound. He started by trying to turn back Cervello's coat, and then uttered an exclamation of surprise:

"Great Scott, Glorietta. He's got a knife in him!"

It was so. Now that her attention had been called to it, Glorietta could see the hilt of a knife projecting from the coat, just in front of Arturo's shoulder. She reached out and touched it, to convince herself. Before she could speak, the Major was proceeding:

"We've got to move again! It's getting too hot here. If we could get back another twenty feet. . . ."

They somehow managed to get Cervello back, but it had to be done mostly by Glorietta. The Major could hardly more than crawl, himself,

"Easy!" said Sidney to her, as she started to lift the young man. "Don't try to raise him. Drag him. I'll push him along and keep him face up. It doesn't seem as though he is bleeding much, and we'd better leave that knife just where it is, for the present. It certainly hasn't struck any vital spot. We'll have to stay here till daybreak. Then I'll try to get assistance."

As they looked at Arturo, his eyes suddenly opened. A faint smile came upon his mouth. Then, he seemed to see Glorietta's face, gazing down upon him, and a wild expression, incredulity and superstition, glistened in his eyes. He tried to cross himself, hastily. ". . . Maria . . ."

"Don Arturo!" cried Glorietta steadily. "Do you know me? *Miss Fenimore!*"

He smiled again. But his eyes were glassy.

"*Miss Fenimore*, do you understand? Did—did *Colonel Fenimore* go out with the Jefe?" She was speaking the question uppermost in her tortured mind.

"The Colonel went out—went out—he has gone out," answered Arturo. "Yes, he has gone out." Then the youth smiled again and repeated softly: ". . . Maria . . ."

"Who do you think Maria is?" asked Glorietta of the Major. Even in this moment, she had a woman's curiosity about women's names, uttered like this.

"I should imagine it was the Blessed Virgin he means," responded the Major bluntly. "But, of course, I don't know anything about it. I think he is probably a religious young cutthroat. They usually are."

"He isn't rational, Sidney. Oh, do you suppose he knew

what he was saying when he said my father had gone out of that building?"

"Who knows? Probably he understood your question, just in that glimmer of understanding. Yes, I think he understood. He kept repeating it. I don't think there's any doubt, Glorietta, that your father is safe."

CHAPTER XIX

LEFT to his own resources, after Major Poulson and Glorietta had gone in the taxi, Freddie Fenimore browsed around in the vicinity of the Hôtel Universal until hunger informed him that it was dinner time. He strolled back to the hotel through narrow streets that were unaccountably becoming lively and colourful with laughing, rollicking young people, and with older folks, grave of countenance, but still with a kind of holiday air. On every street corner there was a singing group, with someone strumming a stringed instrument. Little knots of delighted spectators were watching solo dancers; and here and there a whole party was going through the measured steps of a country dance of Aragon.

"They act like it was Saturday night in Fort Dodge, Iowa," murmured Freddie. "There's something big going on, sure." He looked at his watch. It was past seven. "Sis said she would be back at seven, but there's no telling. I guess I'll eat."

When Freddie entered the Universal, the place had a changed aspect. It was overrun with guests and visitors and campers. They were still arriving, as Freddie stood irresolutely in the hallway. The dress of the men reminded him of a musical comedy. They were mostly wearing the picturesque Aragonese costume—short black velvet breeches, open at the knees and slashed up the sides, with almost as many mother-of-pearl and other buttons as a London coster's coat. The black velvet jackets with

slashed sleeves were also decorated with buttons. A narrow silk handkerchief, tied around the head, left the top of the head exposed and gave them, in Freddie's estimate, a reckless, piratical appearance.

The women were not so gaily apparelled, but they had more personal beauty; and Freddie fed his eyes on some of the loveliest young female faces—oval, olive-tinted, with long black lashes half-concealing provocative eyes of sloe—he had ever seen. "Gosh!" he asked himself, "where do they live? I haven't seen any of these beauties before, and it seems like I've been in Spain a year."

The visitors from the outlying villages were making themselves unaffectedly at home, all over the hotel. Some of them were cheerfully adjusting themselves to spend the night on the bare floor. Others were quite modestly making all necessary toilet adjustments on the stairs.

It was particularly noticeable that nobody got anything slightly resembling service from the proprietor or his family. Nobody seemed to expect service. The richer guests stumbled upstairs with their effects and found their own rooms; or, if they found somebody else's room, they preëmpted it. The upper corridor of the hotel was shrill with minor altercations, misunderstandings, entreaties, raillery, and good-humoured scuffling. Señor Flassa, the keeper of the hotel, was besieged by an army of importunate guests, who seized him by the arms and legs and twitched him this way and that, and poured a thousand inquiries and demands into his ears. Señor Flassa kept his temper admirably. He gave each guest the same amount of attention precisely—which was precisely no attention at all. The only conversation that appealed to the proprietor was that which concerned the morrow's bullfight in the Plaza.

In the midst of this pushing, squirming crowd, Freddie made a rather pathetic, wistful figure. Some of the pretty girls were looking at the American youth roguishly from behind their shawls and fans; some of the men hailed him with rough geniality; but Freddie knew not a word of the language, and was forced to bow, choke, sputter, and otherwise show his gratitude for small favours. Some of the peasants had brought their own food and *botas* and *botijas* of wine; and when they saw the lonely American standing helpless among them, they offered him a share of their food and drink. But Freddie shook his head, bowing low and mumbling, "Not on your life, kid! I tried that once. You're only trying to see how dumb I am!"

A great gong rang, and Freddie surmised that it was meal time. He found the eating room jammed with people, all talking, gesticulating, singing, and howling orders that received no attention. With the advent of the merry crowd, the meals had become à la carte, catch-as-catch-can, and take-what-you-get. Freddie was given special attention by one of the Flassa family, out of courtesy to his helplessness.

"Omelette!" ordered Freddie, "and a bottle of that red wine." He felt sure that "omelette" must be the same in all languages. But it isn't. Freddie received an *olla* full of stew, which at first sight resembled an Irish stew, but proved to be well saturated with garlic. But it was excellent and nourishing, and Freddie clamoured loudly for more. Since he had particularly specified red wine, he was served with a thin yellow wine; but this, too, proved to be an agreeable surprise, and Freddie was glad he had been misunderstood.

At nine o'clock, Glorietta and the Major had not returned, and Freddie began to feel, not alarmed, but as uneasy as Freddie was by nature calculated to feel about

anything. "Of course, they're all right," Freddie assured himself. "The Major is a British nut, but I will say for him that he's reliable and decent. Maybe they broke down on the road. That car they left in looked as though it might drop its engine in the road before it got far."

So, after gazing with increasing curiosity upon the throng in the hotel "lobby," Freddie wandered out into the streets again. A "light pitch man," as he would have been called in the street-vending fraternity of the United States, had set up a curbstone table outside the hotel, and was declaiming the merits of an attachment to keep a cravat in place under a linen collar. Only the blue bloods of the town had ever worn a linen collar of this sort, and the others mobbed the salesman's table to get a view of the curiosity. The inevitable Spanish gipsies, sniffing profits from afar, had swarmed into the city and were gulling the natives with card tricks, fortune-telling, and sundry and similar swindles. Here and there, under the influences of wine, a street fight started; ended suddenly as one of the combatants got a knife in his ribs; and was succeeded by a dance.

"This isn't so bad. I'm beginning to like Spain," said Freddie. But he thought he had better go back to the hotel, finally, to see if the Major and Glorietta had returned.

"You haven't seen my sister, have you?" asked Freddie of the proprietor, when he got a chance at that busy man, who seemed to be holding stakes on certain lively betting. Señor Flassa, innocent of Freddie's meaning, but accepting Freddie's proffered cigar with great joy, patted the young man on the back and replied with a torrent of encouraging but meaningless language. Whereupon Freddie went upstairs to his sister's room, and found it, on opening the door quickly, the scene of a female party, trying on new under-

skirts. Freddie fell out the door backwards and perspired greatly. Then, more gently, he pushed open the door of Poulson's room, and saw that the Major's bed was occupied by a party that, hastily viewed, seemed like three adults and four small children.

"My goodness!" cried Freddie, leaping back, "Glory and Poulson have lost their rooms! I'd better go look at mine!" He did, and found that the room was occupied by a party of young musicians, one of whom was sitting on the bureau, clad in Freddie's bathrobe, and assailing the strings of a guitar with alcoholic verve.

"Say!" cried Freddie, "this is my room! I'm sorry, but you've got to get out of here!"

The music ceased, and the party viewed Freddie with pleasant amazement. They were no less sorry for Freddie than Freddie had said he was for them. They invited Freddie to join them in their attentions to an enormous *bota* of wine. They would even have him sing or play. The man with Freddie's bathrobe and the guitar proffered the instrument genially. Freddie fled downstairs and shouted to the proprietor:

"Say, mister, you got to understand me! There's a lot of strangers in my room! I want to go to bed! My sister's room is full, too, and so is Major Poulson's. We've hired those rooms and we want them."

Señor Flassa nodded and held up a forefinger, which seemed to say: "Just a moment. All requests are recognized." He bawled to a youth who was passing and gave him an order. Freddie waited. In a few moments the youth returned and handed Freddie a package of government-made cigarettes.

"Is there anybody here in this room who can talk English or American?" cried Freddie wildly.

Conversation ceased for a moment. Then an elderly gentleman with a white beard, sensing that Freddie was in dire need of something, stepped forward, took a match from his pocket, and offered it to the young man. Freddie stared at it, muttered a sentence that might be taken as thanks, and wilted against the wall.

By midnight, Glorietta and Major Poulson were definitely given up by Freddie Fenimore for lost. Freddie had also, long since, given up his room and his bathrobe for lost. He now gave himself up for lost, sat on the staircase, and held his head in his hands. He tried to go to sleep with his head resting against the balustrade. The balustrade was harder than his head, and sleep would not come. Freddie rose and went up the stairs, to his room. The party was livelier than ever, there. As Freddie appeared, they all stared at him, rose, and shook his hand and patted him on the back. One of the young men, much the worse for wear, tottered over and seized the huge *bota* and indicated that it was at the disposal of the stranger. "I may as well," said Freddie. He took a long drink. Then he took another. Soon afterward he thought it might be of interest to the company to hear the story about the Pullman porter. He told it with such effect that the whole company, as one man, tottered toward the *bota* and tried to administer it to the orator. Then Freddie told that story about the Hebrew who joined the golf club. Then he began to hear far-away voices . . . and he thought he would like to lie down. The bed was pretty much occupied, but the young American found a space between two singers and occupied it forcibly.

When Freddie awoke, he was alone. The room was redolent with stale tobacco smoke, and the floor covered with débris. Freddie awoke with the feeling that his neck was

not well. He had dreamed that he was about to be guillotined, and had been placed with his head in the proper position for that attention, but the executioner had failed to show up. So he had remained for weeks, months, and years, in that attitude. When he came clearly to consciousness, he was certain that his neck was fastened to something. He felt of it, and found that there was a leather strap around it. Following this strap along, it ended in a guitar. One of the musicians had hung his instrument around Freddie before retiring. Then Freddie discovered that he was lying crosswise of the bed, and that his head had been pillowed on nothing for some hours. It was probably this projecting head which had influenced the musician to hang his guitar on it.

A hasty survey of his belongings convinced Freddie that nothing had been stolen. He found his pistol under the mattress, where he had hidden it, and stuck it in a hip pocket. The young men were not thieves—they were merely celebrants. Only one thing had disappeared, and that was the bathrobe. At first, Freddie concluded that it had been worn forth into public; but later he discovered it hanging out the window, like one of the *colchas*, or bed quilts which the Spanish drape from their windows on feast days. Freddie's taste for colour in bathrobes and pajamas lent itself nicely to purposes of fiesta decoration.

"Lord, how my head aches!" said Freddie dismally. "I wonder what day it is? And what year?" There was music in the street and a loud hurrahing. There was a procession going by—an amateur procession, hastily improvised, which seemed to tail after one resplendent individual in pink satin breeches, but without anything above them except an undershirt without sleeves.

"The bottom part of him looks like a bullfighter, or like the pictures I've seen of bullfighters," commented Freddie. "I suppose the crowd is following the bottom part of him. Whee! How my head aches! I wonder if the Major and Sis got home during the night? If they did, they must have been surprised."

But when Freddie cautiously investigated the rooms that had been taken by his sister and Poulson, he found them quite empty, with no signs that either of them had been there during the night or morning. A few bottles containing eau de cologne and perfume, and some boxes of powder, had been liberally investigated by the intruding occupants, but nothing was missing, so far as the young man could judge. Freddie went back to his own room and shaved with cold water and changed his clothes—the suit he had worn the day before being somewhat the worse for having been slept in. Just as he was finishing his toilet, the owner of the guitar came in, looking for his property. He smiled sheepishly at Freddie, and uttered something that sounded like an apology. Then, pointing out the window in the direction of the Plaza, he cried excitedly:

"*El toro ! El toro !*"

Freddie nodded. "I know it," he replied in his own tongue, thinking the youth had reference to the gentleman in pink breeches who had just gone by. "I saw him! He needs a shirt, though, before he gallops into swell society."

The young Spaniard stared at Freddie a moment. Then he made a gesture, swinging his right arm as though to draw a cloak around him—a gesture which, as performed in Spain, is one of the most graceful attitudes ever struck by a human being. "*La capea !*" he cried excitedly, and bolted from the room.

"Sure, that's the way I feel!" shouted Freddie, after

the other man. Then he philosophized: "It's wonderful how you can make yourself perfectly understood if you talk loud enough and swing your hands."

But as soon as Freddie got down into the street, he knew that something really important was going forward. The crowd swept him along with it. At intervals a group would separate and form a tight knot in the middle of the road, and some frenzied, stentorian voice would deliver a brief harangue. This usually ended in cheers. Cheers for somebody, Freddie knew, for he always heard the same words: "El Conde Saltilla!"

Freddie heard aright. The crowd was cheering for that noble count, that wise and benevolent rootlet of royalty, that sage and disinterested patriot, who had presented the citizens of Teruel with a three-year-old bull with which to make an Iberian holiday. Was there ever such a count? Was there ever such a bull? Was there ever such a bullfight as was going to take place in the Plaza, in the shadow of the gilded bull on the fountain—the replica of that first bull, seen by the knights under the star? Teruel thought not. Teruel was going to have its great day.

Along the Calle Francisco the crowd bore Freddie Fenimore. He looked up at the houses which hovered over the narrow thoroughfare like eager players over a gaming table. From nearly every window hung a brilliantly coloured shawl or quilt—red and orange, orange and yellow, yellow and green, and some like rainbows. The hot colours of dusty Spain fluttered limply in the mounting sunlight. The sky was steely blue overhead, with just a fuzz of fleece in it. It was already growing hot; but not so hot as the people who pushed their way along toward the Plaza, for they were heated with wine, with song, with rhetoric, and with expectation. From a barred window, a mar-

vellously pretty girl, with a marble-white high forehead set under a fortune of glossy black hair, gave Freddie a little surreptitious wave of the hand, taking advantage of the freedom of the day. Freddie waved back again and kissed his finger tips; and those who saw him applauded the young man handsomely. And finally they came within earshot of the Plaza.

The Plaza was an utterly different place from what it had been when Freddie Fenimore first saw it. A rude fence had been built part way around it; a ramshackle fence which would not have kept a determined sheep impounded. For the rest, ox carts, wagons, and country carriages had been backed in, one against another, so as to form a barrier. One space of ten or fifteen feet had been left open; and through this the bull would be led to his fate. In this space a few half-grown youngsters were practising flip-flops and hand-balancing for *perra-chicas*, or ha'pennies, as the English would have called them.

In a rude but stouter enclosure, off at the Cathedral side of the Plaza, was the bull. He had arrived during the night, and all night long he had been prodded and poked, insulted and cheered, until his bloodshot eyes had the devil in them. Two sturdy men had been watching over him all night, but they were incapable of repelling all the fanatics who watched patiently for a chance to lambaste that bull. An urchin not more than ten years old took a cudgelling unwhiningly for the sheer joy of hurling a stone at the black, shaggy creature. There is something about the very sight of a bull that arouses the combative spirit in the average Spaniard. The laziest yokel, who would not walk a hundred yards for a purse of gold, will trot nimbly for half a mile to poke a bull with a stick, call him names, and challenge him to "come on!"

So many amateur bullfighters had stormed the gates of the master of ceremonies—a wealthy amateur of the town, for the *Alcalde* would have nothing to do with the affair—that the applicants had to be weeded out. There were enough clamorous bullfighters to do for twenty bulls. The ones who were chosen to have first go at the animal were those whose followers shouted loudest and shook their fists most belligerently.

An hour before the fight began, the carts and wagons were jammed with yelling spectators, and every housetop, portico, window and window ledge, pole and tree, was squirming with its human burdens. When Freddie arrived, he found himself against the outside of a living wall that had not a point of vulnerability in it. He tried his elbows, obtained several bloodthirsty glances in response, and moved on. For a while, he made the rounds of the outskirts, wondering whether a proffer of money would get him through to the front line. He wisely decided that it would not.

At that point in his wanderings he came to a narrow alleyway, and investigated it. It was a mere slit of a passage, ending abruptly at a high wall. But in a sort of alcove at the end Freddie saw a ladder. He glanced around to see if anybody was looking, and then deftly removed the ladder from its brackets. Not daring to take the ladder out into the square, Freddie brought it halfway along the passage, stood it against the side of the house, and climbed up. To his delight, the central part of the Plaza, where the bull was to be fought, was almost wholly spread before his eyes.

There was a tumultuous roaring from the throats of the mob, and Freddie knew that the bull was being brought up. Some hats—not very good hats—skyrocketed into the

air and fell in the arena. Then, suddenly, the bull appeared, entering Freddie's field of vision on the gallop.

The bull made straight for the fountain, undoubtedly believing that it was the gilded brother on top which had been prodding him all night; saw his error, turned, and began to paw the earth. Then came into the arena his first adversary—a big man, with a bright borrowed cape of pink, a big fellow with Aragonese costume, and a handkerchief around his head. He shouted something at the bull, something uncomplimentary, without a doubt—something too unpleasant for three-year-old bulls to hear, for the bull upset all expectations by suddenly walking in the other direction. The big man followed, shouting; and this was where he made the first mistake of the bullfight. He followed the bull too briskly. The animal abruptly turned, caught the man neatly on his horns, and tossed him ten feet in the air. Cape, man, and knife came down like a bullet, and lay quietly in the arena. The bull sniffed at his adversary and tried to get his horns under him, to toss him again. The crowd howled with delight, shrieking encomiums of praise upon the excellent bull. "Good bull!"

"Round one!" said Freddie Fenimore. "This round is the bull's!"

But the bull was quickly attacked from another quarter. A second amateur, slightly groggy in the underpinnings, stumbled up to the bull and seized him by the tail. The crowd yelled its displeasure. "Good bull! Leave good bull alone! Don't pull good bull's tail!" The bullfighter tried to go around to the other side of the bull, and tripped in his own cape, coming down upon all fours, like a small bull. This presented too good a target for the black animal to miss. He did not charge the amateur. He walked up to him

and sniffed his trousers, and then nonchalantly tossed him a few feet. By that time the first bullfighter was being dragged away by his faithful followers, taking advantage of the animal's new recreation. But the second fighter had, in that brief space of time, become miserably sober. He regretted, as he lay on the Plaza sand, that he had entered the lists. He suddenly rose and made great speed toward the men who were rescuing the first victim. He charged into the group so wildly that two of them were bowled over and the other two fled. The bull stared at this strange proceeding, lowered his head, and would have charged the injured man again, had not a great challenging cry sounded again at his tail. A new aspirant for interment was at his heels.

This new amateur was a little blond man, with bow legs, and, it seemed from Freddie's perch, with a black bandage over one eye. From the roar of approval that greeted his entrance, it seemed that he was well known and highly esteemed as a prospective corpse. He had a ragged blood-red cape, or undershirt—Freddie could not make out—which he flaunted in the bull's face with the abandon of a regular, professional *espada;* or, perhaps, simply of a lunatic. The bull bellowed, and charged. The small man sprang deftly aside, and the animal obligingly followed the red shirt. Tremendous applause! This was in the very spirit and form of Juan Belmonte! Three times the little man repeated this act, in really extraordinary fashion, and the crowd began to cheer for the man. Hitherto the crowd had been distinctly favouring the bull. A man on one of the ox carts became so excited that he fell head first into the ring. A crazed woman, hoping to seal the fate of her offspring as a bullfighter, tossed her infant into the arena

from one of the country carriages. Freddie's heart turned over and stopped beating—but two or three men promptly rescued the child and returned it to its thoughtful parent.

But the crazy act served to overturn what little stability the crowd had left. There was a deafening noise, and a hundred hats—some of them good hats—and as many handkerchiefs were flung into the air, raining down on the heads of the crowd. The bull, meanwhile, was wholly engaged in the attempt to slaughter this provoking idiot with the red shirt. He pawed the ground reflectively, walked backward a few steps, and charged again. Again the bow-legged hero swerved aside, but this time the bull stepped on the shirt, and the halt was so sudden for the man that he lost his balance and fell. Instantly, he rose, pulled at the shirt, trying to recover it. If he had been a professional bullfighter he would have let the bull play with the shirt while he went out and bought another one. But this was presumably his only red shirt, and he wanted it. So he pulled until the animal looked up to see who was doing all this pulling. And by this time the bull had found that it was not a nice embroidered silk cape, but a shirt. Disgusted, he left the shirt and started for the man. Then, rather late in the day, the man began to run. In fact, he ran fast. And in spite of his bowlegs, he was nimble. He ran toward the crazy fence that had been erected on that part of the arena nearest to where Freddie perched. His intention was to vault the fence, but over his shoulder he saw that the bull was too close. There was no time. So, in a last effort, he swerved aside just before he came to the barrier. It was cleverly executed. The man escaped, and the bull struck the fence with a resounding smack, and the fence went down. The crowd, jammed in all

around, somehow managed to fall away a little from that spot, those who did not fall down in trying. And those who fell were not gored, but merely trampled—and the bull kept on going, due south, in the general direction of Valencia and Freddie Fenimore's alleyway.

CHAPTER XX

IN MOST places, the escape of a maddened three-year-old bull into the streets would be regarded as a catastrophe, especially when the streets were teeming with women and children. But in rural Spain, where the craving for the sport is gratified perhaps only once a year, and where—there being no regular arenas—professional bull-fighters are never seen playing the honourable game, such an incident is considered as a bit of dessert added to the regular holiday feast. Sometimes, indeed, lacking both the arena and the energy to build one, the populace is delighted to have a bull simply turned loose in the streets, to see what happens.

So, in the Liberty Plaza, in Teruel, on this happy occasion, the escape of the noble count's black animal was greeted with cheers of joy. The crowd, mounted on their various perches, screamed with delight and cried, "Bravo, *toro!*" as though the beast had scored a point, and deserved congratulations. Most of those in the streets who had a place to run, ran. But a few lucky youths, who hadn't been able to get a seat at the game, were charmed to find themselves in the very centre of action. They tore off their coats and started to flap them, like *capas*, to attract the animal's ferocity toward themselves.

The bull, having made a brave dash into the middle of the street, stopped and took account of stock. He had so many victims to choose from that it puzzled his bewildered head. Then, as though he suddenly decided to call the

whole business off and take a rest, he turned a hopeful eye toward Freddie Fenimore's alleyway and trotted toward it. It undoubtedly looked to the *toro* like an avenue of escape.

At the same moment, two women, racing across the street to get away from the beast, also chose Freddie's alleyway as a quick exit. From his perch, Freddie could see that one of the ladies was past middle age, and stout, while the other seemed to be much younger. Both women instinctively raised their skirts, to make better time, with the result that they displayed both agility and hosiery, and gaily coloured petticoats besides. And one of the petticoats being a bright red, the bull was instantly convinced that he had selected the right place to begin his departure.

The two women entered the alleyway about twenty feet ahead of the bull, encouraged by cheers from the crowd, and by impulsive shouts from Freddie to the effect that they had better hurry. Engrossed by this exciting chase, Freddie forgot that the bottom end of his ladder was planted in the middle of the narrow alleyway. He did not observe this fact until he looked down and saw the women fly past him. Then, seeing that there was not room for both the ladder and the bull, the young man hastily started to climb down. But he started too late. He went down a few steps; saw that the bull would beat him to the spot where he wanted to go, stood irresolutely for just a second, and then started to climb the ladder once more. Coming like a tornado, the animal struck the bottom of the ladder, and Freddie began a quick descent, still clinging to his perch. At the same time his feet slipped from the rung he was standing on, and he fell between this rung and the next one.

The bull had not seen the ladder at all, in his wild flight, so that he made no attempt to dodge it. He was interested in the red petticoat just ahead of him. So, one of his horns neatly caught a ladder rung, and both the ladder and Freddie fell on his back at the same time. It stopped the bull. He had been attacked from the sky. He skidded against the side of the building, half rose on his hind legs, and tried to shake off this strange weapon which had assailed him. He shook Freddie easily enough, for Freddie had fallen clean through the ladder and slipped sideways from the bull's back, landing on his feet. But the ladder would not shake. It merely twitched across the alleyway, obliquely, and stuck. Meanwhile, the two women had reached the end of the alley and stood there, limp with fright, waiting for the bull to break the ladder and charge them. It was clearly death for one or both of them, as soon as the beast broke the ladder.

Freddie understood it, too. For a brief space he threw away all thought of his own safety, and wondered whether it would be of any avail if he should try to leap on the bull's back and grab him by the horns. Then it flashed upon him that he was the possessor of a pistol. He had completely forgotten it. He went into his hip pocket and drew the weapon. Never having shot a bull, his mind worked swiftly on the proper procedure in such events. He had heard sportsmen say that the place to aim at a deer was just behind and below the shoulder. As it happened, the exact spot was being presented to him, now. Freddie put the pistol muzzle within a few inches of the bull, closed his eyes, and pulled the trigger five times.

One shot would probably have been sufficient. The first bullet must have reached the animal's heart. When Freddie opened his eyes, he saw the bull in exactly the same atti-

tude as when he had fired, but there was hardly a movement of the shaggy black body. Then, as he watched, the front legs began to tremble; blood trickled from the foamy nostrils; there was a shudder that ran from nose to tail; then the stocky legs bowed as gently as though the animal were lying down to sleep—and Freddie jumped aside just in time to miss being crushed by the huge bulk. As it was, the ladder, still on the horns, struck Freddie across the forehead as it broke with the falling weight—and he went flat.

In that instant when Freddie fell, he had the excellent feeling that he had performed an important service, a worthy deed. He didn't necessarily feel that he was a hero, for he realized clearly enough that he had had a great advantage over the bull and had really been in no danger, himself, at the moment. Still, he felt that he had saved the women—and he undoubtedly had. He was fortified in this belief by the actions of the two women. For, he had hardly staggered to his feet when they swept down upon him, and the older woman had him in her arms. She cried something vehemently thankful in Spanish and planted a kiss full on his lips. At the moment when she finished this performance, Freddie recognized her. It was Doña Fernandez—the woman whose headache he had cured with aspirin, on the train.

"It is—you!" began Freddie, glancing from the stout woman to her companion, and instantly wishing that the reward had been paid by the other, who was slim, blooming, with red lips and devastating eyes. He got that far when the infuriated populace arrived.

"He has killed our bull! The Englishman has killed our beautiful bull!" cried the crowd, looking desolately at the remains of their present from the noble Count Saltilla.

Freddie did not understand the words, but he was not slow in catching the meaning. In spite of the fact that the stout woman was still clinging to her benefactor, the gang was menacing. Somebody reached from behind and struck Freddie on the shoulders viciously.

"Here! What's the matter with you, you poor fish!" cried Freddie, detaching himself from the Doña's embrace. "Look, Mrs. What's-your-name! Tell this crowd to get away from me! What's the matter with 'em?"

"The Englishman has killed our beautiful bull! Kill the Englishman!" bawled the crowd.

Freddie began to clutch the sense of the demonstration. He might be a hero to Doña Fernandez and her young companion, but in the eyes of the crowd he had committed a worse crime than murder. He had committed several crimes, each one worse than the other. He had murdered that beautiful black bull, the gift of the Count Saltilla—the only bull presented to Teruel sports in two or three years. He had murdered the lovely bull, the sweet bull, the heroic bull, before the bull had a chance to kill anybody, and before he had given more than a fifth part of the performance expected of him. Still worse, Freddie had *shot* the bull! This was murder in the first degree. It would have been bad enough if he had sunk a knife into the animal's spine, as they do to cowardly bulls in the arena. But shooting a healthy bull is ghastly and grisly, in Spanish eyes.

"He has shot our bull, our lovely bull! Hang him! Give him the *cuchillo!*" cried the mob. And that is precisely what they meant to do.

Doña Fernandez understood only too well the temper of the blood-lusty crowd. Their craving for killing being thwarted, so far as the bull was concerned, they trans-

ferred it with added interest to the hapless young American. They called him "the Englishman," for very few Americans are seen in remoter Spain, and anyone who wears non-Spanish clothes is an Englishman until proved otherwise. But it was not as a Nordic—so to speak—that Freddie was being mobbed. A Turk or a Chinaman who had killed the bull would have been treated the same way. Doña Fernandez understood, and from the very first moment that the crowd became menacing, she had whispered something to her young companion, who immediately ran from the alleyway. And now, to protect the young man, Doña Fernandez fairly enveloped him in her embrace, meanwhile flashing a thousand sparks from her eyes, and scolding the crowd with a stream of limpid discourse.

There was something about the Doña that the crowd respected. Some in the throng may have known her, and therefore whispered it about that it would not be safe to take too many liberties with the lady. But the probability is that her powerful, commanding maternal appearance, coupled with the fact that women of her type are greatly respected in Spain, saved Freddie's life until the civil guard came, on the run. With the appearance of these two warlike creatures, who had answered the summons of the young woman, the crowd fell back. Bloodthirsty or not, no Spanish mob takes chances with the civil guard. They are a picked body of sombre, well-armed, determined fellows.

"What is this? What is this?" cried one of the guards, drawing his sword and presenting the flat of it, delicately, toward the crowd nearest Freddie and the Doña.

"He has killed our bull. He shot him!" roared the crowd.

"I am Señora Bárbara Fernandez, wife of Hilario Fernandez, of whom you have heard," explained the woman to one of the guards. "This young man shot the bull to save my life and that of my daughter. He is a foreign gentleman and does not know our ways, nor does he speak our language."

"He should not have shot the bull!" declared the guard quickly. The guard was a lover of the immortal sport himself, and saw no excuse for such barbarism as Freddie's. "Besides, he should not have had a pistol! It is against the law!"

"You should take him before the Alcalde, then, at once," insisted Doña Fernandez. "If he has disobeyed the law in any way, it is not for this gang of ruffians to punish him. You are to uphold the law, officer!"

This was a shrewd thrust. Something glittered in the eye of the guard which said clearly that he would cheerfully see Freddie hanged to the nearest lamp-post, so far as his feelings were concerned; but he was an officer of the peace, and the *guardias civiles* are notably efficient and honest.

"Stand back!" shouted the guard to the crowd. "Away with you! I am going to arrest this man and take him before the Alcalde—and the magistrate will settle with him later."

"But our bull! That won't bring our bull back to life!" howled the crowd.

"The bull is dead," said the guard, with regretful conciseness.

The remark was obvious, but it had the merit of being extremely accurate. And it helped to call the attention of the crowd to the bull and away from Freddie. With the help of the other guard, and followed by Doña and Señorita Fernandez, Freddie was pushed through the

crowd, who spat upon him freely as he went, out into the Plaza, and on toward the home of the Alcalde.

"Run and find your father, quickly!" said the Doña to her daughter. "Ask in the wine shop, near the corner. They will know where he is. Tell him to come to the Alcalde's house at once."

The young woman seized her mother's hand. "They won't hurt him—these silly beasts, will they, Mother? He is such a wonderful caballero! I——"

"Hush!" said the mother. "Go quickly!"

The Alcalde was an elderly, near-sighted, dyspeptic gentleman, with the pointed beard and flowing moustache such as Gustave Doré gave to Don Quixote; an unusually sprightly old gentleman, given to clean linen, soap, and water. He was not enthusiastic about bulls. He regarded bullfighting as indecent, bullfighters as miscreants, and followers of the sport as idiots and loafers. So far, so good, for Freddie. But unfortunately the Alcalde had other cherished dislikes. One of them was for foreigners; and another was for young men about Freddie's age. In addition, the Alcalde detested feast days, civil guards, newspapers, firearms, and interruptions or innovations. Thus he was well equipped to deal acidly with about any case that might be brought before him.

The Alcalde, like a good many other dyspeptics, was a great reader of philosophy. He was such an ardent philosopher that he became greatly incensed when any incident broke in upon his studious reflections. The sudden appearance of a vengeful mob, crying violently for the punishment of Freddie Fenimore, made the old gentleman furious.

"Out! Out of my house!" he cried, as the crowd swarmed

in. "Officers, drive that filthy mob outside. What do you want of me? You have broken in upon my reflections—and upon a holiday, too! Who is this young man? What are these ladies doing here?" Then, recognizing Doña Fernandez, whom he well knew, for her husband was one of the Alcalde's few intimates, he rose and bowed politely. "Respected Doña, what means all this? How are you concerned with this rabble?"

That part of the rabble which had succeeded in getting into the Alcalde's reception room refused to be put out again, nor did they become less noisy.

"He has killed our bull——"

"Shut up, will you? Have you no manners, when this noble lady wishes to speak to me?—Respected lady, do you know this young man? What is the trouble?"

The lady told the story colourfully, shedding copious tears as she described the narrow escape of herself and daughter from the bull. "Besides, Señor Ruig," she added, "this excellent young man did me a good turn just the other day, also, proving himself a good gentleman, of refinement." And she recounted the affair on the train, coming from Barcelona.

"Can he speak our language, Doña Fernandez?"

"No, not a word."

"Ask him why he was carrying a revolver. It is forbidden."

"He did not know that. He was in a strange country."

"Notwithstanding your interest in the young man, I shall have to fine him twenty pesetas for that offence, and the weapon shall be confiscated."

"He will pay it! I will pay it for him, gladly."

"So far, so good," said the Alcalde methodically, making a note of the transaction. "For my part, I wish he had

killed all the bulls in Aranjuez and Andalucia. It is detestable business, this bullfighting. Do you happen to know I forbade it this year? Well, I gave way to the popular clamour. Fools must have their folly. *Siempre se ha practicado así!* I am glad the bull is dead. He had killed a few fools first, I dare say?"

"He wounded one man severely," said the Doña.

"Ha! not enough! Well, I shall not punish the young man for killing the bull. Neither shall I praise him, except that, if you say your life and that of the señorita were in peril, he served you a good turn. You are sure he saved you?"

"Oh, I am certain, Don Felipe."

"Well, then, he did well. But understand, Doña, I cannot be responsible for his safety when he leaves here. This crowd is in violent mood. They are thirsting for blood. You had better take the young man home with you and keep him under lock and key for a while."

Before the lady could reply, the crowd at the doorway was violently thrown back, and a giant of a man, swarthy, moon-faced, and with a great shock of ruffled hair, dashed into the room. Behind him was the lithe, beautiful girl whom Freddie had saved.

"Ah, my husband!" cried Doña Fernandez. "It will all be well, now," she said to Freddie in English.

"My friend Hilario!" said the Alcalde placidly, holding out his hand, but not rising. "Forgive me, friend. It is one of my rheumatic days."

Hilario Fernandez saluted the Alcalde shortly and then turned to his wife. "Is this the young man?" She nodded; and an instant afterward, the giant had Freddie in his arms and was violently kissing him, first on one cheek and then on the other. "You are like a son to me!" he bawled,

speaking English with very little accent. "My wife and daughter—you have saved them both. And before that, you were kind to my wife. Don't be afraid—I'll see that this crowd is satisfied."

Turning to the crowd, which filled the doorway and flowed out into the great hall, Fernandez cried, in a terrific voice: "You shall have a new bull! You shall have a better bull! You shall have the best and fiercest bull ever seen in Teruel! No *capeón*, understand. No *novillo !* A real bull, from the *criadero* of the Marques de Villamarta. Thus you will get two *corridas* instead of one! What do you say to that?" Turning to Freddie, Fernandez said: "I have promised them a new bull. How's that?"

"How much would a good bull cost, d'ye think?" replied Freddie nervously, reaching for his pocket; but before Fernandez could answer, the crowd was in a frenzy. "Bravo!" "A Villamarta bull!" "For next Sunday!" "The young Englishman is all right!" "Long live England!"

"I never bought a bull," whispered Freddie gently, tugging at the big man's sleeve. "Do they cost much?"

"It will cost *you* nothing," was the reply, accompanied by a resounding whack on the shoulder, meant to be affectionate, but proving almost a calamity. "Haven't I told you that you are like a son to me, my boy? I know Americans, and I know America. I love them both, and I have reason to love you. Have you thanked him, Arizona?"

"Arizona!" cried Freddie, as the young woman shyly approached him, with her hand outstretched in good American fashion. "Is that your name?"

"I was born in Arizona," was the reply, in just as good American as Freddie's own. "So I was named for that state. Oh, I wish I were back there again! I don't like it

over here. But I do thank you again and again. My father——"

The Alcalde was speaking again, very dryly and very caustically: "Well, Hilario mine, you have settled the young man's accounts with the crowd. I suppose we shall have this same indecent performance over again, next Sunday, or whenever they get this bull you have promised them. Well, I cannot stop them. Officers, drive them out of here! They smell badly. Pfui! If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas!" And the elderly gentleman actually pulled back his sleeves over his immaculate cuffs, as though they were in danger of being soiled. Then he turned to Hilario Fernandez again. "You will be taking the young man to your home, friend. Evidently he has served you a good turn. Express to him my regrets that it was necessary to fine him for carrying the weapon. He must not do so again. Otherwise, he seems like a decent youth, if there are any such now existing. You must bring him over to-morrow, and we shall have a glass of wine, we three. What place in England does he come from, and what is his age?"

"He is an American, dear friend."

"An American!" The Alcalde stared myopically. "From America? Ah! Sometimes I think Ferdinand and Isabella were ill-advised to finance that expedition of the Italian Colombo. Little good seems to have come of it! But—no doubt he is a good young man—if there are such nowadays." The old man rose and began to bow stiffly, with one hand on his rheumatic hip. At that moment, a servant came bounding into the room.

"Pardon me, excellency, but there is a man at the door covered with blood!"

"Covered with blood! Tell him this is no hospital. What

does he want of me? Is he one of those crazy bull baiters?"

The man answered for himself. A tall figure, not covered with blood, but with a smear of dried blood across one side of his face and apparently with a flesh wound on the left side of his forehead, appeared at the doorway. He was hatless and covered with dust and dirt, yet there was something dignified and military in his carriage. He bowed and said politely, "I apologize for annoying you, excellency. I am Guillem Pallisó, Chief of the Police of Barcelona. I was here day before yesterday and requested assistance from your local forces to help me get some criminals. Your men did not appear, and I had to go with one man alone. I——"

"You have been wounded, señor?"

"It is nothing. A bullet, fired in the dark, grazed my head. But everything has gone amiss. My man is missing, and I fear he has been killed. An Englishman and a young American woman are missing, also, and are probably in great distress. This, excellency, because of your failure to assist me. And the men I was after are two of the worst rascals in Spain."

"I gave orders——" began the Alcalde petulantly.

"No doubt, excellency. But the orders were not obeyed. I now ask you to give me no less than three well-armed men, at once, men used to the rough mountain country. I wish them to be mounted, and I must have a horse for myself. God knows how I have got here! My clothes are half torn off, as you see. I beg pardon, ladies, for intruding on your conference, but you will understand.—I have seen this young man before, somewhere." The Jefe had turned to Freddie.

Fernandez translated quickly to Freddie what the Jefe had told.

"It's my sister and Major Poulson he means!" cried Freddie. "I'll go along with them. They'll let me, won't they?"

"I'll go too," said Hilario. "I'll find a horse for each of us. You shall come home with me at once. At what time do you leave, señor?" he asked of the Jefe.

"I need food and drink. Then, as soon as the men are ready!"

"Do you want me to go along?" asked Fernandez. "I can find my own horse. I am used to riding in a rough country."

The Jefe gazed at the giant figure approvingly. "Good!" he replied.

CHAPTER XXI

THE speed and decisiveness with which the police chief recruited his men, saw them properly mounted, patched up his dishevelled clothes, and rid himself of some of his dust and blood demonstrated clearly that he was a Spaniard of Catalonia—that bustling corner of the peninsula which believes in getting things done. The Alcalde, now aroused to the seriousness of the situation, stormed and threatened in his elderly and vitriolic rather than his philosophic manner. The result was that Freddie Fenimore and Hilario Fernandez had barely time to equip themselves before a civil guard was knocking at the gate to announce that Pallisó was ready to move.

They made a brave showing, quite military in appearance, as they cleared the gate of the Salvador Tower and took the high road to the east. The Jefe rode in advance, alone, silent. Behind him came two guards, not at all delighted to be dragged thus away from the festivities of town, but rather well pleased, since they had to go, to be the object of such interest as they attracted from the curious crowd along the streets. A troop of barefooted youngsters formed a long queue behind the party, as though it were a circus parade; and even after the horses were spurred, when the eastern road was gained, some hardy youths still kept pace with them, leaping and yelling and imitating the firing of rifles. Somehow it had become vaguely known that a man hunt was going forward and that the American strangers were concerned in it.

Behind the guards rode Freddie and Fernandez. Don Hilario was in high spirits, like a man who has been long chafing in enforced idleness. He poured out a constant stream of conversation, speaking in English with only the most trifling accent, and even using American slang in a free and easy way.

"You have been in El Paso?" Fernandez asked Freddie, to begin with.

"I have been through there on the train."

"It was not far from there, on the Mexican side, I had my first ranch. Not far from Guzman. Ah, that was a ranch! Never do they see anything like it over in this country. I sold it at a good profit and went to Arizona, where my daughter was born. There I learned to love the Americans, for they were very honourable with me. There was a matter of a lawsuit over the land I bought, yet despite the fact that I was of Spain, and those who sued me were well-known men, I was treated fairly. Very true, I was in the right, but it would not have been so everywhere. The Englishman and the American have a sense of justice. You bet! Then came the war, and when prices were very high, I sold all my stock, young and old, at sixty dollars a head. That was a price, eh? You bet! Never shall we see such a price on the hoof again, eh? Not on your life! And then I sold my ranch as well, fool that I was, because both the wife and myself felt homesick for the old country. 'We shall go home to Teruel,' we said, 'and live like king and queen the rest of our lives, and Arizona shall be a princess.' And at first, I must say we liked it well. We were the richest people in the town. But you can't stand the old country my boy, after you've had a taste of that new country over there. I should say not! We found we didn't talk the same language any more. Even my wife, who most

wanted to come back here, couldn't get along with her old friends. And our Arizona was quite lost."

"How long have you been here?" asked Freddie, to be polite, though he was not attending the discourse closely.

"It was in 1920 we came to Teruel."

"Well, if you didn't like it, why didn't you go back to the States?"

"Why didn't we? That's just it. Six foolish years we've spent here in this place, without liking it, and why? You tell me! I suppose it's because we've fallen into the old ways of Spain and begun to live like our old friends and neighbours—just one day after another, eat, sit in the sun, and sleep. But ever since the good woman met you on the train the other day, she has been telling me——"

"Excuse me just a minute, Mr. Fernandez," interrupted Freddie, "but there's a funny looking old cart coming toward us, and I was wondering—there's a woman in it—and it looks like——"

"Just some country people," replied Don Hilario. "I was saying that my wife and daughter have been talking about nothing but——"

"If that isn't my sister in that cart, I'll eat this horse!" cried Freddie, spurring his horse forward. "And Major Poulson, too! Hey, Sis!"

Freddie's horse passed the Jefe on the gallop, and the police chief put out a detaining hand, crying something to the young man. But, at that moment, the Jefe himself identified Glorietta and the Major, who were approaching in a rude cart, drawn by two bullocks, whose bodies swayed rhythmically from side to side as they moved along like a couple of enormous snails, while the ungreased axles whined, screeched, and groaned by turns. Instantly, the Jefe put spurs to his mount, and in a moment the whole

party was alongside the cart. The driver of the ancient rattletrap gazed at the horsemen in a frightened way and seemed about to leap off his perch and run for his life. But he was reassured when two of his passengers began to talk quickly with the horsemen.

"Freddie!" cried Glorietta delightedly. Then immediately she asked: "Have you seen Father anywhere?"

"No, I haven't. But—what's the matter, Sis? You're as pale as a ghost! What's happened?"

"Don't ask now, Freddie. I'll tell you all about it as soon I can. We've had a horrible experience, Sidney and I. And we've got Señor Cervello here, in the bottom of this cart. He's badly hurt. And the Major can hardly walk."

Meanwhile, the Major, whose tightly drawn lips indicated that he was in considerable pain, was speaking with the Jefe in Spanish. The chief of police pointed at the cart and indicated his surprise. "Don Arturo?" he cried. The Major nodded. In an instant, the Jefe was off his horse and had climbed over the side of the rude farm wagon. He looked for a second at the upturned white face of Arturo Cervello, lying on a bed of straw in the bottom, and then let himself down inside and kneeled beside the young man.

"Easy, there!" shouted the Major to the Jefe. "He's got a knife in him still. God knows whether he's alive or dead. He was alive when we started, but if this frightful cart hasn't finished him, then he was born to be hanged."

The Jefe shivered as he lifted Major Poulson's coat from the young man, and saw the handle of the knife. "We didn't disturb it," explained Poulson. "It wouldn't have done any good, and if he had started bleeding, we couldn't have saved him."

"Oh, the poor boy!" moaned Pallisó, with the tears streaming from his eyes. "That's the work of Corcega!

Yes, it couldn't have been Balmes—though he would equally have been capable of it. But Balmes couldn't have recovered his knife, which I made him throw in the straw. Oh, the poor boy! And he was such a fine young man."

"Fine young man!" exclaimed the Major. "Yes, he was a fine young man," he continued ironically. "I'm sorry the poor devil had to get a knife in him, but considering that he is an accomplice of this Spanish Prisoner gang, and led the Fenimores into this ambush——"

"No, no, señor! You are wrong," cried the Jefe excitedly. "You do not think—is it possible——?" He stared at Poulson first, and then down at the figure of Cervello. "Wait!" he said. "I must get help at once. I shall send one of the guards back to Teruel for an automobile and a doctor. Ah, it would be a pity if Don Arturo were to die—so young and so fine a lad!"

"So young and so fine a lad!" repeated Poulson in amazement. "What under heaven is the Jefe thinking about? Has he gone clean crazy! He actually seems to think well of this young upper-class bandit."

The Chief was giving orders to one of the guards and pointing in the direction of the town. Poulson heard him say: "Ride like a madman! Get the first doctor you can find and the best automobile. Don't waste any time, and don't leave Teruel until you see the doctor and the automobile on their way. Then get back here as soon as you can!"

When the Jefe returned to the cart, he did not explain to the Major at once, but instead turned to Glorietta, who was standing with difficulty against the side of the wagon, limp and colourless. "Señorita, I ask your pardon—oh, you cannot speak Spanish! Señor, will you please present my compliments to the young lady and tell her that I have

ordered a motor car to be sent out from Teruel immediately. I see she is not well. It is extraordinary we should find you here on this road. But—" and here the Jefe lowered his voice, though as he spoke in Spanish there was no danger of Glorietta knowing what he said—"what you should not tell the young lady, señor, is that her father and two evil men have gone away together in the mountains and we are now on our way to find them. We have had a fight with them, as I shall tell you later."

"You don't need to tell me that," responded the Major. "Miss Fenimore and I were in the next room in that building where you broke in upon the rascals. We heard everything. We heard a shot fired——"

"Not possible!" exclaimed the Jefe incredulously. "How did you come there?"

Poulson told the Jefe briefly of the way in which they had been lured to the place—of the hold-up of their motor car and their subsequent awakening to find themselves imprisoned in the warehouse. "There's nothing left of the place except the walls now," he added. "The last of the burning roof fell in at one o'clock this morning, and we sat in the dark until daybreak. Then I found the way to the home of the man who owns this wagon, and after lifting Cervello into it, we've been on the road ever since."

"The warehouse burned? What an experience! And you were locked in that next room all the time. Ah, the poor señorita! What a hardship for her! But where did you find Don Arturo?"

The Major told him. "Ah, so that was it? I should have sworn it was Señor Fenimore who had been hurt! Then it must have been the lady's father who went out past me, first."

"Glorietta, your father is safe, somewhere!" said Poul-

son, seizing the young woman's hand and squeezing it encouragingly. "What the Jefe tells me makes it certain!" Glorietta nodded wanly. She was too weak to display much emotion. But she made a brave attempt to smile, and replied with a little pressure of the fingers.

"Freddie," said the Major, "let's help your sister out and put her in an easy position over there on that bank until the automobile comes. The poor girl is almost done in. We've had a miserable time of it. Come, Glorietta."

The young woman, almost lifted bodily by her brother, was taken from the cart. They found a pleasant spot in the shade, on the upper side of the road. Even as she tried to talk with Freddie, Glorietta's eyes closed from sheer fatigue. In a few minutes, she was sound asleep. Her bruised, tired body could go no farther.

"You'll be wanting to go on, I suppose," said the Major, addressing Pallisó. "I'll tell your man, when he gets back, to follow you. Meanwhile, I can take care of Cervello. I really don't think the boy is so badly hurt. He hasn't lost much blood."

"Not for anything shall I leave until the poor boy is in the hands of the doctor," replied the Chief. "We'll get Corcega and Balmes, never fear. They can't get away from us. These two guards know the country perfectly."

"But I can't understand about Cervello," began the Major curiously. "Do you mean to tell me——?"

"Exactly," interrupted the Chief. "I was going to explain that, señor, when I broke off to dispatch the guard for the doctor. Don Arturo has been working with me on this case from the beginning. In fact, I should not be here if it hadn't been for him."

"But I distinctly heard one of the men in that room say that he wished he had Cervello with him to act as inter-

preter, when they were trying to swindle Colonel Fenimore," objected Poulson. "And why should Cervello have attached himself to us? And why should he have led Miss Fenimore out here to this wilderness——?"

"I will explain it to you, señor," replied Pallisó. "I must be very brief, because, so soon as the doctor comes, I shall be off. Later, I will tell you everything you wish to know. You have observed, have you not, that Don Arturo is a gentleman of fine family?"

"Very good. But that explains nothing. I have known——"

"He is of very good family, a brave and worthy young man. You shall see. When he first came to my office in Barcelona, he told me everything. He had been approached by the man Corcega, who wished him to act as an interpreter in the Spanish Prisoner swindle. Don Arturo was very poor; he was starving. But his ideals are high, señor, and he was furious that the good name of our country should be dragged in the dirt by these Catalan criminals. He wished me to place them under arrest. At first I merely laughed at him. What could I do? I have had numberless complaints about the swindle. The American consul and your own consul have appealed to me on numerous occasions in the matter, but it was of no use whatever to arrest Corcega or his gang. They have been practising their swindle for years, and they have laughed at all attempts to stop it."

"You mean that they have friends in high places?" asked the Major.

"I do not say no to that, señor. You are a man of the world, and you understand that corruption exists everywhere, in Spain not least. But that is not the reason my hands were tied. The reason is that, under our Spanish

laws, the police cannot act unless a felony has been actually consummated—the money must have actually been paid over, in this swindle, and the prosecuting witness must be present in court himself to testify. Otherwise, the swindlers would go free, regardless of what the magistrate thought."

"Very well, I see that. But I don't see——"

"Pardon me, señor, I will explain. Do you not see that the prosecuting witness is never present because he dares not appear? Consider that these rascals are offering to their victim the estate of a man who was a fraudulent bankrupt! The victim, then, if the Spanish Prisoner existed at all, would be exactly as guilty of fraud as the bankrupt himself, or his agents. So, when these clever swindlers induce their victim to hand over his money, they snap their fingers in his face and say to him: 'Get out of Spain as quick as you can go! You will be arrested, otherwise, for assisting at a fraudulent bankruptcy.' The victim becomes frightened, no? He sees jail staring at him, no? He is a stranger and does not know our laws, and down deep in his heart he realizes then, if he did not know before, that the whole transaction was crooked. So he becomes alarmed and flies."

"I see," nodded the Major. "That's clear. But Cervello——?"

"It was Don Arturo, then, who suggested to me: 'We shall catch these criminals by being present when the money is passed. Then, even if the victim is not present at the trial, we shall be witnesses of the unlawful act. But we shall inform the victim of his rights and make it clear to him that he can be present at the trial, for we shall then say, to protect him, that he acted under our advice." It was for this that Cervello wished to join your party.

It was arranged between Don Arturo and me that Señorita Fenimore and yourself should be present when the lady's father had his rendezvous with the swindlers. Alas, the plans went wrong. Corcega has his spies everywhere, it would seem. And you and the lady were held up on the road. Sainted Virgin! Everything went amiss! Yet it was not Don Arturo's fault.

"Understand, then, señor, that I accepted this plan of Don Arturo's, and was able, through a fund I have for the purpose, to give him a miserable small wage, barely enough to keep him in food. This was months ago. In the meantime, he prepared himself by taking lessons in English, so that he could deal with the swindler's victims if they were English or American."

"And you mean to say, señor," asked the Major, showing an unusual emotion, "that this young man, without any hope of reward, and merely because he felt that it was the right thing to do, lived on rather less than nothing a week all that time so that he could stop the Spanish Prisoner swindle? Come, now, señor, isn't that a bit—unusual?"

"You are cynical, señor. I do not blame you. This is not a world of ideals, in our times. Yet I am telling you the exact truth. The boy—I call him so because he is really little more than a youngster—is unusual, possibly, but he is the soul of honour. He has that fine sense of right which, in past times, and even to-day, distinguishes some of our best families. I admit freely to you, señor, that at first I could not make out the lad. But gradually I saw that he was working for the honour and the good name of our country."

"By George, I've given the poor chap a rough time of

it, I'm afraid," said the Major, in English. "But, confound it, why did he need all this gloomy secrecy?" Then, turning to the Jefe, he continued the idea:

"But why, señor, was it necessary to keep Miss Fenimore and myself in the dark about what he—and you—were up to? If Cervello had come to us and explained frankly——"

"Ah, he could not do that!" was the answer. "You and the señorita had come across the ocean to prevent the Colonel Fenimore from falling into the hands of the swindlers. But exactly, we *wished* the Colonel to fall into their hands, no? Never have we been able to catch the swindlers in the act of consummating their crime. That is why they have operated at will."

"I see that. But we should have understood your plan. We would have joined with you."

"Perhaps," was the smiling response. "But I could not take it for granted. No, señor, I still believe my plan was best. Unfortunately," he added ruefully, "the rascals knew too much of my business and yours. They are clever. But we shall have them! I shall see them in prison within a few days." The Jefe drew himself up to his utmost height, and slapped his thigh with his outstretched palm.

"But if no money was passed——" began the Major suddenly.

"What do you mean?"

"I have reason to believe that Colonel Fenimore brought no money with him beyond his expenses. The Colonel——"

"Impossible!" was the response. "Nobody crosses the ocean on a mission like his without——"

The Jefe's firm conviction on this point was abruptly punctuated by the appearance of one of the guards, who had gone scouting up the road, on the side away from the

town, for his own amusement. He clattered up to where the Major and the Chief stood talking and saluted excitedly.

"Excellency, there is a great bulk of a man coming afoot. He is a foreigner of some sort and speaks English, I think. I could not understand him. Is it possible he would be the American you are seeking?"

Both the Jefe and the Major gazed in the direction indicated by the guard's forefinger. Round the bend in the road came a dejected-looking figure, dusty, plodding, walking pensively with bowed head. He wore a broad-brimmed felt hat, which he took off every twenty steps, and mopped his brow with a handkerchief. The sun was waxing hot, now.

"It's the Colonel, as sure as taxes!" cried the Major. "Oh, Freddie! Freddie! Here comes your dad! Glorietta!"

Glorietta did not hear. She was too soundly sleeping. But Freddie looked up, recognized the approaching figure, and started toward it on the run. The Major, forgetting his injured leg, started at the same time, but gave it up and waited. He heard Freddie shout, and saw the Colonel look up, stop short, pass his hand over his eyes as though he refused to credit his vision, and then hold out his arms wide. And there came floating along the road a shrill whoop from the lonely pedestrian, which was at once an expression of surprise and a pæan of joy.

There was no mistake about it—it was Colonel Erskine Fenimore, and he was on the first lap of a journey common to "busted" enterprises, theatrical, real-estate, and Spanish-Prisoner. He was walking back to Los Angeles.

CHAPTER XXII

WITH three convalescents on her hands, Glorietta was kept busy. To be sure, only one of her patients was really in need of nursing, but the other two concocted devious schemes to claim a part of her time.

The Major did not pretend to be badly off physically. He sat in his room, cheerily cursing his luck, and waiting for his strained tendons to recuperate; but he fell back upon a very great truth in demanding a share of Glorietta's presence. The body, said the Major, is well known to be susceptible to the influence of the mind. When the mind is at peace, therefore, the body heals rapidly, and vice-versa. Now, pursued the Major, nothing was more conducive to his peace of mind than to have Glorietta at his side. Ergo, he needed Glorietta.

Colonel Erskine Fenimore, in the next room, likewise claimed to be ill, though it was difficult to diagnose his complaint. He ate zestily of the food that was brought to him, and his voice was as rugged and far-reaching as ever. He alternated between denouncing Spain and peevishly asking where the devil Glorietta was. He also contributed some remarks to the effect that, if he had Corcega and Balmes in Los Angeles, he would decorate them with the order of the tin ear. But he stubbornly clung to his couch, against all suggestions to get up and take the air. "There is no air in Spain," said the Colonel loudly. "There is

nothing in Spain except bugs, beggars, and bunk. What are we staying here for, anyway?"

"Major Poulson isn't ready to move yet, Dad," explained Glorietta, "and poor Arturo has to be cared for."

"Let 'em go to the hospital," replied the Colonel peevishly. "I want to go home. Where's Freddie spending his time? I haven't seen him since yesterday morning."

"Freddie," replied Glorietta, "is in love."

"In love?" gurgled the Colonel. "What for? You don't mean that seriously, Glorietta? Can't you stop it? Who's he in love with? Not one of these——"

"Yes, one of these. Her name is Arizona Fernandez, and she's really a beautiful thing to look at. Señor Fernandez used to be a rancher in Mexico, and also in Arizona. That's how she got the name. Freddie tells me that the señor is very rich. They seem to think they are going back to the United States when we go."

The Colonel seemed to improve in health at the mention of the reputed wealth of the retired rancher. A new hope shone in his eyes. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully and remarked, with a far-away look, "Well, Freddie's no fool; that's certain. Tell him to bring Senior What's-his-name over. I'd like to talk with him. Does he speak American? Is that so? Well, we can have a nice little chat. Freddie didn't say how much money the senior has, did he?"

"No, he didn't," was the reply, a trifle impatiently.

"Well, now," drawled the Colonel. "Where do they live, Glorietta? I might take a walk over and see them. I believe I feel a lot better. Er—by the way, what did you do with that Bellemary stock I gave you for safe keeping?"

"It's in safe keeping, Dad," said Glorietta quickly. "You don't look quite so well to me this morning, Dad. If I were you, I'd just stretch out and be comfortable."

And she hurried away, leaving the Colonel to make certain computations on a sheet of paper, with a pencil of which neither end was greatly chewed.

The weather was growing hotter day by day. Fortunately, after the holiday, the swarm of guests in the hotel had disappeared. Only a few travelling men, irritable and contemptuous at being marooned in Teruel overnight, were left. Señor Flassa, utterly worn out by the work he had not done, and by the excitement of the bullfight, went back to his somnolent seat in the shade, just outside the entrance. For nobody would he stir, upon any provocation whatever—for nobody except Glorietta. Whenever Glorietta wanted anything, Señor Flassa was electrified. He bounced from his chair and followed the American girl like a loyal Newfoundland dog, to the infinite disgust of his wife. Being unable to make Glorietta understand a word of what he said, and being unable to understand a word of what she said, Señor Flassa, hopelessly enamoured, fell back upon bowing and scraping, and shouting vociferously to the rest of the family to come and render service to Glorietta, *pronto*.

The three convalescents were now installed upon the street floor of the hotel, which was most comfortable in hot weather. Badly furnished though they were, the rooms were high studded and airy, and the air had that soft, seductive quality which is a thing of Spain alone; a sensuous perfumed bath, which gradually puts the will to sleep and makes dreaming seem the sole reality. Overhead, a steely blue sky came into being with each new dawn, and the placid movement of the fleecy clouds that wheeled along the horizon, or gently rested on the Eastern Sierras and the Albarracin, set the tune and time of all things underneath. Glorietta was beginning to feel the spell.

It was becoming harder and harder to move about in her ordinarily brisk way; and easier and easier to sit and talk and dream. It was hard, particularly, to remember yesterdays. Again and again she roused herself and tried to hurry, even when there was no possible need of hurrying. Always she lapsed back into a delicious peacefulness, in which everything around her seemed to take the form of a delicate caress.

It was particularly so when she was with Arturo. To be sure, he needed her help more than the others. He, alone, had been badly hurt, and even now the fever that had followed upon the treatment of his wound was hovering over him. There was an unhealthy flush in his cheeks, and his eyes were sometimes too bright. But he was recovering as rapidly as could be hoped.

The mute gratitude and affection that shone from Cervello's eyes troubled the young woman. He was so patient, so eager not to be of trouble to her, so pathetically self-reproachful concerning the ambush into which he had unwittingly led Glorietta and the Major, that she was constantly ill at ease. Wherever she moved, in the room, his eyes followed her with hungry wistfulness. She took refuge in an artificial levity.

"I don't know much about Spanish doctors, Don Arturo," she said on one occasion, "but this one seems to be pulling you through. Maybe he has quarrelled with the only undertaker in town."

Arturo did not quite catch the humble witticism, but he replied thoughtfully: "We have a saying, señorita, in our Spanish language, '*Dios es el que sana, y el médico se lleva la plata.*'"

"What does that mean?"

"It means," replied Arturo, "that God cures people of

their sickness, but the doctor gets the money. But in this case, señorita, if I could say it without being bad, it is not so much God who has cured me as you. I have given you so much trouble. You have been so gentle and good. Señorita, when I was not so well as I am now, do you know that I used to look at your face, as you stood over me, and I thought it was an angel. I closed my eyes quickly, then. I did not dare to look. Ah, señorita, I know it was an angel looking down upon me—but it was not the kind I thought. I——"

"Oh, don't say these things. You make me feel ridiculous, Don Arturo. Why, I've been happy doing the few little things I was able to do, for you and the Major."

"The Major, is he greatly better, I hope?" said Cervello, suddenly. He looked into her face eagerly as he spoke.

"Oh, yes, he's much better. He wasn't badly hurt, you know. He was wounded during the Great War, and——"

"He is an excellent man. I like him much," went on Cervello, as though he had not heard. "Except for him, I should not be here." He shivered. "And he risked his life for me, though he thought I was a traitor! It is hard to understand that. I mean, it would be hard for many of my people, who hate terribly when they hate, to understand. But I think I know. He has some different sense of obligation toward people than we have. Is that it?"

"He was splendid," replied Glorietta simply. "He couldn't help being. He couldn't do anything but what he did. It's just—well, just the way he is, that's all."

"I can only thank him from my heart," said Cervello soberly. "But that is all he would wish. I look forward to seeing him. I shall tell him I wish—I wish him to be always happy."

Something in the little choke of the voice clutched at

Glorietta's heart. She turned away quickly and said, "You will see him very soon, Don Arturo. Couldn't we—couldn't we talk of something else, now? Oh, I know! You said, once, that you were going to tell me about the Lovers of Teruel——"

"*Los Amantes de Teruel*," repeated Cervello fervently. "Yes, señorita, I remember. We were at Murviedro when I said that. Have you seen them?"

"Oh, no. I wouldn't dream of seeing them. Is it really true that their poor bodies are preserved in the Church of San Pedro, here? I passed the church yesterday, but I didn't go in. But I should like very much to hear about them."

"It is one of the great true stories of Spain, señorita. So often it has been told in poems and plays and books. Perhaps it is not true in every way, but I feel that it must have been true, in part. And it was here, in this very place, that it all happened. The young man's name was Diego de Marsilla. He came from a very good family, but poor. There are many like that, even nowadays." Cervello smiled: not a smile of self-pity, but rather as one who saw the hidden irony of it.

"Yes, and not only in Spain," said Glorietta.

"No, señorita, I know that. Well, the young lady's name was Isabel de Segura, and she too was from a noble family, and not rich. They were the times of the wars, and many had been made poor. Don Diego was in love with Isabel and she with him, but when he wished to marry her, her father said it could not be thus. He did not object to the character of the caballero, and he liked him, indeed, and would have been glad to have him for a son-in-law, but it was necessary in his eyes that the husband of Isabel have money."

"And that isn't peculiar to Spain, either," commented Glorietta.

"Also there lived at this time in Teruel," Cervello continued, "a man named Azagra, who was not a good man, but rich. When he saw Isabel de Segura, who was exceedingly beautiful, he wished her immediately for his wife, and thus he went to her parents and offered himself and his money. It was a very good marriage, they thought, but still they liked Don Diego and did not wish to hurt his feelings, so they told him that Isabel should not be married to Azagra for five years. Meanwhile, if the younger man should make his fortune, he could marry the lady he loved. So he went away to the wars."

"They must have paid soldiers higher wages than they get now," said Glorietta.

"No, señorita. It was not that. But in those days, when the opposing armies captured a city, they robbed the people of everything, and the stolen goods were divided among the officers and men. It was bad, very bad, but such were the days. So Diego hoped that he might become rich on these spoils. He was in the wars for five years, and all that time Isabel did not hear from him, not a word. I do not know why. Perhaps he wrote to her, but she did not get his letters. So, at the end of the time, the parents said she must be married to Azagra. She did not wish to marry this man, but she felt that Don Diego had ceased to love her, because she had not heard from him. She did not know that he was already, at that very moment, on his way back from the wars and near to Teruel. So close was he that, just as he arrived in the city, he found that the marriage ceremony was being performed. He was too late. His heart was sad, because he thought Isabel had ceased to love him. Yet he wished to be near her, and so

he was present at the bridal feast. She saw him there but turned her face away from him."

"Well, really, you couldn't expect her to wait forever for a man who had writer's cramp that badly," murmured Glorietta, who was too much of a realist not to sympathize with the heroine's point of view.

Cervello, his eyes glistening, ignored the modern point of view. What he saw, alone, was the grand romance of the whole story, which had been the first tale of his childhood.

"The poor heart of Isabel was torn by the appearance of her lover, and she begged her husband to let her be entirely alone that night. Azagra consented, and during the night, Isabel heard a noise at the window, and suddenly Don Diego stood before her. He reproached her with infidelity to her promises, and she, who felt that he had been inconstant, was also bitter. At last Diego begged for just one kiss before they should part forever. She would not give him the kiss. Instead, she said she hated him. He asked her three times, and each time she refused. Then he fell dead at her feet."

"He showed his first gleam of sense, there," said Glorietta, under her breath. Aloud, she said, "And what did the lady do then, Don Arturo?"

"There was a great funeral," was the answer. "Everybody in the town went to the funeral, and the coffin was open in the church. The poor Isabel came in and stood over the dead body of her lover a long time. Then she leaned over and placed a kiss upon his lips; and when the people saw she did not move, afterward, they ran and raised her up. But she was dead. She had died of a broken heart, like Don Diego. Is it not a beautiful story, Señorita Glorietta?"

"Yes, it is beautiful," said Glorietta; but she was not

thinking so. The tale irked her, and she scarcely knew why. Instead of seeming beautiful, it seemed only cruel and stupid. She looked down at Don Arturo and saw that he was breathing hard; his eyes were illumined with pleasure; something about the recital had filled him with rapture. "What on earth can he see in that silly yarn to become enthusiastic about?" was her thought. And then it swept in upon her—that this was Spain. This was the Middle Ages before her. This was the mediæval mind—the spirit that inspired chivalry and the crusades, the spirit that slew mercilessly, robbed, burned, and fired with the torch —for strange Oriental ideals! Unreasoning courage and fantastic quest; the bold spirit of the conquistadores and their insensate cruelty and greed; a passionate love of the pageant of life, rather than of life itself—a worship of love for love's sake, which amounted almost to madness; but a careless disregard of the feelings of the beloved—all these things, however refined, were the heritage of Arturo Cervello from a thousand years behind him.

"Ah, señorita, that was love!" Cervello was saying, and his eyes burned; glowed like two ruddy coals. "I cannot be like Don Diego, but that is the way I would die at your feet, if I had only the depth of his love. From the first time I saw you, I knew that I could never be happy again. I knew that you were not for me, but I felt that I must follow you everywhere. It was on the train, coming to Port-Bou, you remember, and you were sitting opposite me. I . . ."

She scarcely heard him any more. His voice, musical and well modulated, with an added charm from the fact that the language he was speaking with too-great precision was not his own, poured out upon her. He had a simple enjoyment of his own ecstasy which swept her along with him. His very words seemed to cover her face with kisses.

Mediæval or not, it was a declaration of passion that took no account of time or place, or even of himself or her. It was a lyric to love itself, as an end and purpose of life. And when she saw his face, she saw that all the uncertainty and unsureness—which had made him seem so youthful in the face of practical matters—was gone from it. Now he was a man and lover, and he spoke with compelling certainty. He was speaking of what he knew best of all.

". . . that is the way I would die at your feet. . . ."

"But I don't want you to die at my feet. I want you to live and be happy, Don Arturo!" she cried.

His very helplessness cried out to her, his physical helpnessness of the moment, and his helplessness in this modern world of activity. He was at once a lover and a child, and the two personalities combined cried out to the woman that lay deepest within her. Fascinated, wavering, her heart beating fast, Glorietta reached out blindly and touched his hand. If he had seized her fingers abruptly in that instant, when all hot and dusty Spain around her was pressing her onward . . . but he did not. He covered her hand for a moment, and then lifted it feebly to his lips.

"I must go, Don Arturo!" Glorietta cried suddenly. "I'll be back soon. Call for me if you need me!" She went straight to the door of Major Poulson and knocked.

"I want to come in and talk with you," she announced; walked in, and sat down in a chair beside the man.

He looked at her, saw that she was greatly agitated, but said nothing. He knew where she had just been.

"Sidney," she gasped breathlessly, "I've seen the real Spain!"

CHAPTER XXIII

"HOW is our young Don Quixote?" asked Major Poulson, after Glorietta had regained her composure.

"Why do you call Arturo that, Sidney?" was the return question. With the recollection of her last few moments in Cervello's room, her cheeks blazed, and she gave the Major an appraising glance, to discover what lay beneath his remark.

"Because that's exactly what he is," was the response. "You know, Glorietta, I've been thinking a good deal about that chap lately. He's extraordinary. Now that we know the truth about him, he's more of a puzzle than ever. Somehow, he seems left over from the age of chivalry. He goes out, like Don Quixote, to joust with windmills. Of course, he differs from the old Don in having sense enough to know that windmills are windmills, and not dragons or giants; but he might have known that his little tin sword never could bring them down."

"I don't know that I understand, Sidney. I do remember reading about the old Don trying to fight a windmill with his lance, but what has that to do with Arturo?"

"Why, it has this to do with him: he takes it into his honest, old-fashioned, chivalrous head that these Spanish Prisoner ruffians are traducing the good name of Spain by preying upon foreigners. Now, that's understandable. Of course, we none of us relish having the reputation of belonging to a nation of thieves. But then, what does he

do? He goes to the Jefe of Barcelona, a rather hard-boiled individual who has enough troubles without borrowing any, and manages to saturate the Jefe with his notion that these beggars ought to be jailed. Really, it must be difficult to stir up a police chief about something that isn't directly annoying him. You have to be a convincing zealot to do that. But out young Don manages to do it. Then he works out a neat little plan by which they can catch these thieves in the act, which is necessary under the Spanish law."

"It seemed logical enough, Sidney."

"It was logical. It was perfectly all right. But our Don Quixote and his Sancho Panza from Barcelona started out to capture the villains without any reasonable preparation, and Arturo was absolutely unarmed. If that isn't fighting windmills with a popgun, what is it? And you can see how it has worked out. Even if the Jefe and his unwilling helpers manage to lay hands on Corcega and his bully, which I doubt, they're no better off than they were before. Your dad says himself that he gave them no money. He was trying to sell them—er—stock for—er—moonshine."

"Moonshine for moonshine," suggested Glorietta. "Don't be afraid to say it, Sidney. Father's getting worse and worse, as he gets older."

"Oh, well, that's not the point, anyhow. I was thinking rather of this poor, brave little knight, Arturo."

"You do really think he's brave?" came from Glorietta quickly, with a flush of unconcealed gratification.

"Brave? Of course he is brave. The poor chap! I don't imagine he has the strength of a robust American or English girl. He'd be amazed, no doubt, if you told him that he had courage. But for disinterested, chivalrous courage, I don't know of anything finer than the way the young Don went into this row. It was death to him, Glorietta, if

he and the Jefe didn't manage to put their quarry in prison. Do you understand that?"

"You don't mean——?"

"Of course! Don't you see that when he joined up with the police, he was more dangerous to Corcega and his band than any police official could be, alone? Arturo knew the whole crew. He knew exactly what their plans were and how they intended to proceed. The cry you heard that horrible night we were in the storehouse—that cry just after the shot was fired—was in Spanish, Glorietta, and you didn't understand it. The word was '*traidor*,' which means traitor, and this gang of ruffians could forgive anything but that. And that word, mind you, wasn't hurled at the Jefe, for he was certainly no traitor. It was meant for Don Arturo—and that's how he happened to get the knife. Do you see?"

"Do you think—in case they don't catch those men——" Glorietta's voice shook.

"I do. You mean, will they kill Cervello when they get a chance? One may as well state it bluntly. Yes, they will, unless they run very much away from form. And the young Don knows it. He may be unpractical and mediæval, but he's no fool. He's rather clever, in his cloistered way. That's why I say Arturo showed the highest kind of moral courage. By George, I admire him. I'm frightfully sorry, the way I treated him. But, confound it, how was a chap going to know what the deuce he was doing? It looked like a cheap and egotistic method of shunting us off, to clear the way for fleecing your father."

"But what can we do?" asked Glorietta, laying a hand upon one of Poulson's. "Sidney, we can't leave him here—in Spain—if—if he would be killed."

"I've already made up my mind, Glorietta. I'm going to

take him back to the States with us, if he's willing to go."

"Do you mean it? Oh, he must go, Sidney! He must go! I think you are right when you say they'd kill him. It's splendid of you. I'm sure we can get him something to do, something respectable, in Los Angeles. He's qualified to teach Spanish, isn't he? He could do that."

"I was thinking of that very thing, Glorietta." And then the young woman perceived that the man's eyes were fixed upon hers. Half-curiously, half-seeking his own fate in her eyes, Poulson was regarding her steadily. She felt the blood mount to her cheeks once more.

"It wouldn't be fair—to let you take him to the States—without telling you," she said, with an effort. "Sidney, it is true—at least, I think it is true—Arturo is in love with me. He—has said so."

"I knew that," was the ready response. "I think even the train guards knew it. As I said once before, Glorietta, it does him credit. Really, that isn't so important. The important thing is—otherwise."

"No, I do not love him, Sidney!" cried Glorietta firmly, seizing both the man's hands and looking into his face, her lashes wet with the straying tears. "You're too decent ever to seek your own interest at the expense of anyone's feelings, dear. I've always respected you, Sidney, since the first time I saw you, but it has just dawned on me how wonderful you really are. Not because you've been so fine toward Dad and Freddie and me! Not because you risked your life to save a man you thought was a mean thief! Not for any reason you could think of or I could tell you clearly! But just because I love you, Sidney, and I have loved you for months and months, but I didn't want myself to know."

"You didn't want yourself to know? Really, Glory,

that's strange. And I never took the slightest precaution against your knowing that I loved you. I believe I mentioned it a number of times. I'm certain I never kept it from myself."

"I wanted Spain. I thought I wanted Spain," she said, laughing through her tears.

"You wanted Spain? Really——"

"You don't understand. I don't want you to understand. Some day, when this is all forgotten—this wild adventure of ours—I'll tell you. Meanwhile, Sidney, don't be a simpleton! Don't stand there beaming on me like a stage moon. I'm talking too much. Why don't you stop my silly talk?"

He did. And, when he released her from his arms, at last, he said, with a sigh of relief, "I feel rather better, really, about taking the young Don Quixote back to the States. I confess it *did* disturb me rather."

"Do you mind my being very fond of poor Arturo, Sidney, in a way you could never possibly resent?"

"I'm rather fond of the chap myself," was the reply. Poulson's reward was immediate. And after she had kissed him enough, Glorietta patted his cheeks and said roguishly:

"Marry me, Sidney, and I'll go to Los Angeles—or anywhere!"

CHAPTER XXIV

THE scholarly and philosophic Don Felipe Ruig, Alcalde, was again torn from the bosom of his library a few days later, when the Jefe and his guards returned to the town triumphantly with their two prisoners. The Jefe and his companions returned on horseback; but Señores Corcega and Balmes had no such luck. Tied up neatly with ropes, they achieved the journey afoot, punctuating their progress with curses and outcries, threats and offers of bribes. It was, indeed, rather rough on two men of such girth as these. The sun of Aragon beat down upon them, converting the roads into a dusty furnace, and every step sent up a choking cloud. But the Jefe had no pity for the fat sharpers. When they lagged, he rode up beside one or the other, and managed to plant a spur where it would create the greatest acceleration.

There is a grapevine telegraph which makes all such affairs known, in the rural districts. Somehow, even before the Jefe set out with his prisoners, it was rumoured that they were on their way. Even bullfighting paled and dwindled before this new excitement. Four or five miles from the walls of the town the outposts of enraptured spectators began to appear, cheering the captives on with a shower of stones. It was not well understood just wherein the prisoners had sinned, but they were now in the same category as bulls and needed delightful chastisement. To do the Jefe justice, however, he stopped the stone-throwing

quickly. Possibly he felt it a point of police honour to retrieve his men whole.

Once the prisoners were lodged in the stout town *carcel*, the Jefe went first to the Alcalde and announced his capture. The elderly magistrate was not at all pleased. Not only the Jefe, but the prisoners as well, were Catalans, and it seemed like imposing upon a quiet and orderly neighbourhood. But he frowned and sighed and ordered his secretary to make out the necessary summonses, and prepare for a judicial inquiry. It was clear, from what the Alcalde said, that he had little patience with the whole proceeding. He knew the Spanish Prisoner trick by hearsay and had small sympathy with its victims.

"To-morrow morning, at ten o'clock," said Don Felipe sharply. "Have your witnesses present and see that my time is not wasted."

From the Alcalde, the police chief went to the hotel and inquired for the Major. "I've got them," he announced simply, when he entered Poulson's room.

"Splendid!" cried the Major. "How did you manage it?"

"They were hungry. They dared not go farther eastward, into the mountains, and they were certain to come sooner or later to one of the shepherds' huts in the vicinity of the old warehouse. I simply waited for them."

"Did one of them have the pistol he took away from me?" asked the Major.

"Yes. I regret that I cannot return it at present. It is being held with other articles taken from the men when they were searched. How is the poor young Cervello?"

"Much better. I think he'll be strong enough to appear against the ruffians."

"So much the better, Señor Comandante," was the

reply, "for I do not feel altogether sure that we have those fellows yet. It depends upon the attitude of the Alcalde. I fear he is annoyed with the business. He certainly doesn't view me with favour. I dare not ask him to let me take the men back to Barcelona, because no crime was committed there, so far as we can prove. It may amount to nothing, after all."

Next morning, at ten, the offices of the Alcalde presented a lively picture, which pained Don Felipe exceedingly. The old gentleman had thoughtfully dressed in black, with immaculate linen, and a skullcap. He took note of the persons present icily enough, and then nodded to the Jefe. The latter stood up.

"I will hear you. What is the charge against these men?" asked the Alcalde.

"The charge is larceny, your excellency. These men, as you know——"

"I know nothing about it," interrupted the Alcalde shortly.

The Jefe proceeded to outline the Spanish Prisoner swindle for the benefit of Don Felipe's rigid judicial attitude, though it seemed quite apparent that Señor Ruig was not listening. Perceiving that this was the case, the Jefe gently glided over some important details, only to be brought up with: "*No hay atajo, sin trabajo!*" "There is no short-cut without making extra work!"

"Yes, your excellency," responded the Jefe promptly. He decided that the Alcalde had been listening, after all. "The truth is, then, that these two men have conspired to rob, and have robbed, several foreign gentlemen, in the manner I described. As you are aware, our law does not declare this to be larceny unless the act is consummated, and then witnesses to the act must be in court. This is why

I came to Teruel, your excellency." At this point Corcega whispered something to Balmes, and both men laughed softly. A distinctly defiant look shone on the face of Corcega; Balmes merely looked puzzled and curious.

"Where is the man they have robbed?"

"They first robbed a man, not long ago, named Huckins, an American——"

"Huckins!" The Alcalde made a wry face. "Is he here?"

"No, your excellency. The man Huckins left Spain quickly because they told him that he would be arrested for compounding a fraudulent bankruptcy. But this robbery took place here in your town, or near it, I am certain."

"The man Huckins is gone. You have no witness of the transaction," the Jefe was reminded. "You say yourself——"

"Pardon me, that is true. But the next transaction was with a man named Fenimore, who is present." The Jefe beckoned to the Colonel, who stood up. The Alcalde did not appear even to look at him. "The gentleman is an American."

"Does he speak the language of Spain?"

"No, sir; nor do some of the other witnesses. But there is an estimable man here, an English gentleman, who speaks our language well. In spite of the fact that he himself is one of the witnesses, it seemed to me——"

"Is that the English gentleman?" asked the Alcalde, pointing to the Major. The Jefe replied affirmatively.

"It is proper, I think," concluded Don Felipe. "Now then, señor, you tell me that these men conspired to rob the American gentleman Fenimore of certain money, claiming that they would give him the key to a certain

trunk or bag containing certificates of deposit representing money in an American bank. Of what sum of money, then, did they rob him? And was the money found upon the persons of these men?"

The Jefe coughed reflectively and paused. Then he said, "The American gentleman did not have cash money upon his person at the time, but negotiable stock in a *sociedad anónima* of the United States, which he controls. This seems to me to be the equivalent of money, so far as the law is concerned."

The Alcalde looked puzzled. "Where is this stock?" he asked. "Show it to me."

The Colonel, on being informed of the question, fumbled in a coat pocket and produced several pieces of paper. These were handed to Don Felipe, who scanned them curiously. "Ask the American gentleman what these would be worth?" he demanded.

"Not a penny less than sixty thousand dollars!" cried the Colonel, when the question was translated to him. "And a whole lot more."

"Ooooh, my gracious!" gasped Glorietta to the Major, at her side. "The Bellemary stock is worth more in Spain than it is in Los Angeles. Please stop him from talking, Sidney. If he begins to tell the old gentleman his usual whoppers, we'll all be put in jail. I don't think Don Felipe likes us very well, as it is."

But the warning came too late. The Colonel, once upon the floor, had a message to deliver. "Your honour," he said, thrusting out his right arm oratorically, "I don't know as you ever heard of me, but if you was to ever come to Los Angeles, you'd find plenty of people who know me. This little development of mine is one of the nicest pieces of ground in Los Angeles County. Before I took over this

property, I had it examined by some of the shrewdest men in the business, men who have spent their lives——"

"Stop the gentleman!" ordered the Alcalde. "I do not know what he is saying, but he speaks too loudly. He will give me a headache, and I am subject to headaches. Stop him!"

"Sit down, Colonel!" whispered the Major, kicking the promoter's leg sharply.

"Not till I tell him what this stock represents," said the Colonel. "I want him to know that he is dealing with people of importance, and none of your fly-by-nights. Senior what's-your-name, that stock you hold in your hands represents the investment and best judgment of a——"

"Can nobody stop him?" cried the magistrate. "He will drive me crazy! What is he saying? I merely asked him a little question, and he is delivering an oration."

"Sit down, Dad, quick!" said Glorietta, grasping her father's coat tails. "The Alcalde is very much impressed by what you said, and he says, if what you say is true, the stock should be worth more than you claim."

The Colonel sat down and rearranged his coat collar. "Well, if that's what he means, he ain't as big a fool as he looks," said he, mollified. "But if I had this Spanish bunch at home, the boss senior included, I'd work 'em in the chain gang. They all look crooked to me."

The Alcalde gave a fillip of relief to his white cuffs, and continued, speaking to the Jefe: "If the stock, as you call it, was handed over to these prisoners, how does it happen that the American gentleman took it from his pocket?"

Corcega laughed aloud, and Balmes echoed. The Major looked at Glorietta and made a slight grimace. Freddie

Fenimore, who caught the idea, without knowing the words, stared at the ceiling.

But the Jefe was undisturbed. "You will perceive, in the list of articles taken from the prisoners, your excellency, that there is one such piece of paper, representing a certain number of shares of stock. This I took from the pocket of Corcega."

"You lie, you dog!" screemed Corcega, leaping up and shaking a huge fist at the Chief of Police. "It was not in my pocket."

"The two guards will say that I tell the truth," replied Pallisó easily. And the two guards so testified.

"Great Scott, I'll wager the Jefe took the stock out of his sleeve!" whispered Poulson to Glorietta. "Look at your dad's face! He certainly didn't know that he had parted with any. But the confounded stuff is like those American cigar coupons. If Father remained in Spain, he'd have the country flooded with it." Poulson uttered the word "Father" with a delicate implication that Glorietta's father was also his father. A little pinch of the arm informed him that he was understood.

"It is a lie, a dirty lie!" shouted Corcega, his face puffy, like an angry adder. "Not a penny did I take from the American. The Jefe is lying, your excellency."

"Sit down!" was the answer from Don Felipe. "Señor Jefe, I believe you, because you look like an honest man. But really, I do not think it of great importance whether the man got the stock or not. I do not regard the stock as of any value. I read the newspapers, and I do not put any trust in this stock of Los Angeles. If I am not mistaken, there is much similar stock of no value. I shall expect better evidence of the passage of money than this."

"There goes the case!" whispered Major Pouison to Glorietta. "It's time to adjourn."

"Whatever you do, don't tell Father what he said," said Glorietta, after the Major had translated the Alcalde's opinion to her. "Dad would create a scene and get jailed for contempt of court."

"At the same time——" went on Don Felipe, transferring his icy glare to the prisoners, who were indulging in great hilarity. Balmes looked over at Don Arturo, who sat, pale and mute, on the other side of Glorietta; and the knave had the effrontery to make a sign as though drawing a knife from his belt and feeling the point of it. But the joy went out of his face when he suddenly looked up at the magistrate. "At the same time," the Alcalde was saying, "these men are rascals, undeniably I see it in their faces. I haven't the least doubt that they are the swindlers you claim, Señor Jefe. Still, can you assure me that the American gentleman, who was so anxious to get hold of money which belonged to the creditors of the Spanish Prisoner, if there had been such a prisoner, actually paid over to these men one good hard Spanish peseta? That would be money. That would be important, in proving larceny."

The closest inquiry failed to elicit the slightest evidence that the prisoners had taken a Spanish coin, of any denomination, from their alleged victim. The Alcalde threw up his hands with a gesture of helplessness. Then he suddenly turned to Corcega and Balmes. "What have you two men to say for yourselves?"

"Why should we say anything?" replied Corcega cleverly enough. "We are unjustly accused, your excellency."

"Nevertheless, you will tell me what you were doing with this American in Teruel; and also why you led him to an

out-of-the-way place to transact your business. You must have had some purpose."

"Perhaps it was to see the country," sniggered Corcega, who felt absolutely sure of himself. Let the Alcalde say what he pleased, had he not already announced that there was no case of larceny? "The Americans are great travellers."

Balmes wriggled uneasily. He had more fear of magistrates than his leader, and this seemed flying in the face of their good luck. And Balmes was right. The Alcalde rose from his seat, clinging to his rheumatic hip, and glowered upon the daring Corcega. "Give an account of yourself, fellow!" he cried shrilly.

"We have had no money from the American, and is not that the point of the matter?" said Corcega easily. "If the truth were known, your excellency, this man Fenimore has borrowed money from myself and Urbano, not once, but several times. It was because, he said, he had not changed his native money. But where is the money he borrowed?"

"Ask the American if this is true," said the Alcalde to Poulson. The Major translated the question, and the Colonel drew himself up in injured dignity. "I did not borrow money!" he roared. "I did accept a few temporary loans. It shall be repaid, with interest!"

"Also he took two hundred and more pesetas from us as we were coming up in the train from Murviedro," bawled Corcega. "It was with a pack of cards. He said it was to kill the time, and he would teach us the American game of pokair, or something of that kind. He said to us that the jokair was a wild animal. The jokair, your excellency, was a strange-looking card, and generally remained in the hands of the man Fenimore. Two hundred and

more pesetas, in silver, he took from us with his wild jokair."

"Ask the American about this," commanded Don Felipe.

"It is true," agreed Colonel Fenimore. "I tried to teach them the game. But they are too thick-headed to learn. A beginner with brains always wins; but these fellows couldn't play their hands when they had 'em."

"I see no larceny in this, unless the American has committed it," said the magistrate, after a time. "Señor Comandante, you are a man of integrity. Tell me of your connection with this matter. Likewise inform me how the pale young man came to be injured. I wish the truth."

Major Poulson gave Don Felipe a brief account of what had led up to the adventure in the old warehouse, not forgetting to stress the fact that the Colonel was an amiable gentleman, temporarily embarrassed, and of an optimistic frame of mind which led him to see pretty much what he wished to believe, and disregard everything else. Having presented Colonel Fenimore in this more agreeable light, as he thought, the Major proceeded to tell the story of the abduction of himself and Glorietta, of their night in the warehouse, of their forcible imprisonment and escape, of his rescue of Cervello from the flames. All the while he spoke, the Alcalde watched his face with an interest which he had not previously shown.

"Pardon me, Señor Comandante," said the Alcalde, at last, "do you really mean to tell me that this young lady did all the things you say?" He stared at Glorietta as though she were a strange being from another world. "I do not question your word, señor, but it is very strange, you

will admit. Women are not intended to endure such hardship without being utterly destroyed. And the señorita looks perfectly well. I cannot understand it."

"Every word is as I have said," the Major replied. "But I should like to impress upon you, illustrious señor, that so long as these two criminals are at large, the life of the young man Arturo Cervello will not be safe. And you can see that he is an excellent young man and has served his country well."

"The young man is worthy," agreed the Alcalde, looking upon Don Arturo with compassion and interest. "But, unfortunately, nobody saw him stabbed. Who did it? You may imagine it was done by one of these two men, but there is no proof. The Jefe himself admits he saw nothing. We must be judicial. It is one of those unfortunate matters which calls for punishment but where punishment is impossible."

"You are the most worthy magistrate in Spain," cried Corcega, jumping up. "I honour you, excellency, for your integrity. You are not to be bamboozled by the attempt to put two innocent men in prison. We had nothing to do with stabbing the poor young man. What if the police chief did it himself, in the dark? What about that?"

"Sit down, and keep still," ordered the Alcalde. He turned to the Jefe and said slowly: "I regret, Señor Jefe, that you have no case of larceny against these men, whatever we may think privately. Also, I doubt if they could be convicted of an assault with the knife upon the young man. It would be hard to prove; nay, it would be impossible. The attempt to commit larceny from the American is clear enough. They do not deny it. But that does not appear to be punishable."

Corcega grinned, and Balmes looked relieved. Each of

the two fat men reached for his hat, expecting that the trial was over.

"However," went on Don Felipe, "there is a law of the reign of Alfonso Onceno, which clearly applies to the kidnapping of citizens of any country at the moment friendly to our great nation. The act of kidnapping such aliens is construed, *prima facie*, as an intent to do bodily harm, and there are records of the severest punishment being dealt to such evildoers. The fact that the Señor Comandante and the lady were forcibly held and imprisoned indicates that some unlawful purpose was behind the abduction. In addition, if anything more were needed, both the gentleman and lady were placed in great peril of their lives by this act, and escaped a horrible death only by their own great wit and strength. The abduction is proved. The prisoners do not deny it. The English gentleman was assaulted with a club, also. I therefore find that there is sufficient cause to hold these two men for trial before the *audiencia*. Meanwhile, they should be lodged in jail. Officers, take them out of here!"

After the fat sharpers were dragged out, cursing and struggling, the Alcalde spoke to the Major. "This rubbish," he said acidly, "should be restored to its owner." He gathered up the Bellemary stock certificates as though they were unclean, and passed them to Poulson. "Also, I have a question to ask you about the American, Fenimore."

The Major looked greatly concerned. The attitude of the magistrate had been from the first suspicious toward the Colonel, and it was evident that he did not like him. Glorietta somehow caught the idea, too, and when she saw the Alcalde glance toward her father and gather up the stock contemptuously, she whispered to Poulson, "What is he saying, Sidney?"

"He wants to ask me a question about your father," replied the Major. "I—I hope he isn't going to be nasty about your dad's intentions in coming to Spain. He looks capable of it. I'll try to smooth the old gentleman down. Meanwhile, keep your father away from us."

"Yes, your excellency?" announced the Major, coming over to Don Felipe's side with a persuasive smile.

"I am a retired scholar, Señor Comandante," said the Alcalde, "and I do not keep up much with affairs. Yet, when I was a younger man, I had much interest in games of all sorts. Will you have the goodness to ask the American gentleman to show me the pack of pokair cards which contains the wild jokair?"

CHAPTER XXV

"FREDDIE," said Colonel Fenimore reflectively, after draining the last drops of his coffee, as they sat outside a little café near the Plaza de la Libertad, "I was beginning to think this trip of mine was probably ill advised. But now, I don't know about that. Things seem to be coming along. Sometimes, you know, you do something that seems foolish, and you find out afterward that it was the right thing, after all."

"That's so," admitted Freddie absently.

"What's so?" asked the Colonel suspiciously. Freddie's assent had been too urbane.

"Whatever you said, Dad," was the frank answer. "Something about your being glad you came over here to Spain. The fact is, Dad, I've got a date with Arizona and her mother, to go out and see some friends of theirs. It'll be a total loss for me, because none of their friends can talk English. But I've got to go, and I'd better be moving along."

"Where are they now?" asked Colonel Fenimore.

"Oh, they're over at our hotel, condoling with the Don."

"What Don? You can't get around the streets here without trampling all over Dons. This country is as full of Dons as Hollywood is full of actors."

"I mean Don Arturo. They brought him enough flowers and candy and pastry to sink a battleship. And Don Hilario says he'll be personally responsible for all Cervello's ex-

penses to the States. 'No, no, señor,' says Major Poulson. 'Sí, sí, señor,' says Fernandez. And when I left they were si-si-ing and no-no-ing like a couple of yard engines. Gee, nobody ever made a fuss like that over me! I guess I've got to get myself stabbed and attract some attention. Well, I'll go along."

"No hurry, Freddie," replied his father, cocking one foot up on an adjoining chair and signalling to the waiter. "It's bad form to be on time over here. Nothing is on time. The clocks are wrong. Time doesn't mean anything. You ought to know that.—Another cupper coffee, waiter.—See, Freddie, these mozos are getting so they understand me!—It's about these Fernandez people I wanted to speak to you. They seem like nice folks. And Arizona, she's a real pretty girl."

"I'll say she's pretty," Freddie agreed. "She's a dream. She isn't like a lot of these so-called Spanish beauties, either, that look great till you come closer. Then you notice that they're getting double chins at the age of eighteen. They don't exercise, that's the trouble. They hate to cross the street on foot. But Arizona's different. She likes athletics, and hiking and all that sort of thing. And she's clever, too. It's funny, Dad, isn't it, to find a girl living over here who has been to school in Tucson, Arizona. She's wild to get back to the States. Why, Dad, a girl has no liberty over here at all. Arizona says they won't let her go out of the house without her mother or grandmother or a servant with her. She can't go walking because they won't let her go alone, and everybody else has lost the use of their feet. She tried to get some of her girl chums here interested in tennis, but they said exercise would make them masculine. Can you beat that? She says the girls do nothing when they get together but sit around and talk about some young fellow

they met at a party six months ago, who told 'em their eyes were driving him crazy. Their excitement is limited to getting one visit a week from some boob dressed like an undertaker, who comes in and hold's grandma's knitting all the evening and gets thrown out at ten-thirty."

"But I got the idea that the Fernandez folks were pretty advanced, Freddie."

"Oh, they are. That is, the señor and the señora are. But there's a grandmother—I think she's the señora's mother—who runs the social affairs. Whenever I call, the old lady sees that I get a nice seat over near the door, while she and Arizona sit on the sofa. She understands just enough English so that I can't tell Arizona anything but the weather conditions, and my impressions of Spain, which, if I told what I think, the old lady would call the police. She has the whole family scared to death. Thank the Lord, she isn't going to the States with them."

"Then they're really going?" asked the Colonel eagerly.

"I'll say they are. Don Hilario telegraphed a couple of days ago for a suite on the same boat we're sailing on. He's going to leave his house just as it is and come back next year to dispose of it. He's through with Spain, and so is Arizona's mother. Don Hilario talks about buying another ranch somewhere in the Southwest."

"There's no money in cattle these days," said the Colonel firmly. "He'd lose his money in a hurry. I'll have a heart-to-heart talk with Fernandez when we get on the boat. The big chance is in the development line, now. Did you say anything about the Bellemary proposition to him, Freddie?"

"No, I haven't had a chance. Besides, Dad——"

"Well, that's all right. That's all right," nodded the Colonel. "Perhaps it's just as well you didn't. I can explain

it to him myself, better. He didn't say how much money he was prepared to put into a ranch, did he, Freddie?"

"No. Not exactly. He did say something about an outfit that was offered to him for seventy thousand dollars, but he didn't like the location."

"Well, you run along now," concluded the Colonel affectionately. "I wouldn't say a word to influence you my boy, one way or the other; I mean, so far as your feelings about the young lady are concerned. You've got to live your own life, and happiness is the chief thing, Freddie. I've got no dislike of foreigners, if they're the right sort. And I will say that these Spanish women conduct themselves with great dignity, and seem more domestic, so to speak, than the average run. I'll go so far as to say, Freddie, that if Mr. Fernandez should want to make a little close family corporation of our Bellemary development, why, a real handsome daughter-in-law is better than a homely one, any time." The Colonel slapped his son on the shoulder and laughed gaily.

"Do you know what Arizona is called, here in Teruel, Dad?" asked Freddie, getting up to go. "They call her the Rose of Aragon."

"What? The Rose of——" The Colonel stared at Freddie for a moment. "Wait a minute, my boy. This—this is more than a—a coincidence. Thunder! There's a meaning to this! It's a sign—a sign that everything is going to be all right. The Rose of Aragon! Why, that's the name of—of the—well, I won't tell you just now. But it's prophetic, that's what it is. I——" But Freddie, who was keener for the realities than for prophecies, was already on his way.

"Well, well, I shouldn't be surprised if we had a Rose of Aragon in the family, after all," chuckled the Colonel, when he was left alone. "The Rose of Aragon! Sounds pretty.

It would make a nice name for a high-class restaurant, or a cabaret, on the main street of Bellemary. I've got to prevent Mr. Fernandez from sinking his money in a cattle ranch, though. He'd lose it, sure as shooting. Besides, I've got to keep him from falling into the hands of these crooked realtors. California is full of them. . . ."

After a time, Colonel Fenimore rose, threw some coins on the table, and stalked back to the hotel in great humour. He held his head high again. He felt well, optimistic, eager. "It seems great to be going home to-morrow," he said. A remonstrating voice behind him made him look back. It was the waiter, flourishing his arms. He pointed at the coins in his hands, and made signs that the amount was insufficient. "Oh, well, why don't you use American money?" growled the Colonel, good-naturedly. "How am I going to know what those coins are worth? Here, here's a whole flock of Chinese nickels, or something! Take 'em all. I've got no further use for 'em, thank heaven!"

At the hotel, Colonel Fenimore found Glorietta already packing the extremely light effects of the party. "Well, little girl, I can leave this country without a single tear," cried her father, embracing her. "Glory, I never thought we'd all be travelling home together! Why, before I saw you and Freddie and the Major, here, I almost wept every time I thought of doing that trip home alone. Now, we'll have a regular party, on the way back. Let's see, there'll be eight of us, including the Fernandez family and young Cervello."

"There'll be seven, to be more exact, Dad," said Glorietta, giving her father a hearty kiss. "The Major and I are going to be just one, instead of two."

"Seven? I make it eight. What d'ye mean?"

"I mean, dear old Pop, that the Major and I are going

to stop over long enough in Barcelona to get married by some kind English clergyman there. We have it all arranged."

"No! You don't mean it, Glory! Well, well. I might have expected it. Not that I object in the least. No, sir! The Major is a fine man. He hasn't much of a business head, but he's all right. Well, well. Give your old dad another kiss, Glory. It's fine! And, between you and me, little girl, I shouldn't wonder if Freddie was getting ready to take the plunge before long. You know—that pretty Fernandez girl——"

"I wouldn't count those chickens before they hatch, Dad," was the reply. "We know Freddie. And we don't know Arizona. Still, she is a beauty. She's almost the loveliest thing I ever saw."

"What do you think they call her? The Rose of Aragon!" murmured the Colonel, with a sigh of content.

Freddie was not at dinner at the hotel that night. He had been invited to the Fernandez home. Neither did Don Arturo appear. Señor Flassa explained to the Fenimores, when they came in from a ride, that a carriage had called for Señor Cervello just before six, and that the young man had left his compliments and regrets that he could not be present.

"Do you know whose carriage it was?" asked Major Poulson quickly. For an instant, he wondered whether Arturo had been kidnapped.

"It was the carriage of Don Hilario, señor. Don Arturo asked me to say to you and the Señorita that he felt quite well and strong, and you must not worry about his going out."

So the Major, Glorietta, and the Colonel dined together.

After dinner they went out into the cool, sparkling evening and took one last glimpse of the town. Later they played dummy bridge, in Glorietta's room, until half-past ten. "I hope Freddie won't disappear this time, the way he did in Paris," suggested the Major. "We've got to get an early start if we're going to get that train down to Murviedro."

"Arturo is over there with him. They'll probably come home together," replied Glorietta.

But, as it happened, Freddie came home alone. He arrived at quarter to eleven, and they heard him enter his own room, bang the door, and then come out into the hall again. A moment afterward, he knocked at Glorietta's door, looked in, saw the occupants, entered, and threw himself into a chair, with his hands stuck in his coat pockets, and a dreary expression on his face.

"What's the matter, Freddie? Didn't you have a good time?" asked the Major quizzically.

"It's all off! They're not going!" growled the young man. "I've had a swell time, Major. It was as funny as a hearse. I'm all sore with laughter. These Spaniards are crazy."

"What's all off? Who's not going where, Freddie?" asked Glorietta.

"The Fernandez family isn't going back to the States with us. Neither is Don Arturo. They're crying about it, up there, now. They're all talking at once, and shaking hands, and acting like a revival meeting. I tell you, these Spaniards are crazy. Whatever you think they're going to do, it's something else again."

"You don't mean that Mr. Fernandez has changed his mind about—about going back with us?" gasped Colonel Fenimore, horrified. "Why, you said this morning that

they had telegraphed for reservations on the boat, Freddie."

"Are you sure about Arturo, Freddie?" put in the Major. "We had it all arranged. I was talking with him this morning, and he said——"

"I thought Don Hilario and his wife and Arizona just couldn't stand it in Teruel any longer," came from Glorietta.

"Don't ask me," said Freddie disconsolately. "All I know is that Spaniards are not right in their heads. And it's contagious. I feel queer, myself, already. The quicker we get out of here the better."

"But what happened?" persisted Glorietta. "How did all this come about?"

"I went over to the Fernandezs' to dinner, didn't I? And to spend a pleasant evening? All right—fine! And who should come in but Don Arturo, just before dinner. It seems they decided that he ought to spend his last night in Teruel with them. Well, that was all right. The Don—I mean Arturo—was all joy and gladness, and everything was going swell. They gave me a headache, because first they talked Spanish and then they talked English, and then they talked half and half. They were saying what they were going to do when they got to America, and how fine a country it was, and all that, when all of a sudden Don Arturo jumps up and begins to walk up and down the room waving his arms and shedding tears, and he goes to Don Hilario and wrestles with him; and says, 'But we must not do this, my friend! We are wrong! We must not leave Spain! Spain needs us!' And the grandmother says, 'Ah.' And every time Don Arturo says anything after that, the old lady rubs her hands and says, 'Ah!' And sometimes she

says 'Ah' whether Arturo said anything or not. I could see that she thought he was the Daniel Webster of Spain."

"But——"

"Don't ask me! How do I know? Don Arturo began waving his hands and talking this foreign language, and Don Hilario pulled out a big handkerchief and began to cry into it, and Señora Fernandez had hysterics, and Arizona put her arms around her mother's neck, and I almost forgot myself and cried on my own shoulder. All I could make out of it is this: that Don Arturo has changed his mind about going back to the States with us, because he says that it would be running away from a country which needs all the stout hearts and willing hands it can get. And, believe me, from what I've seen of it, it needs more than that. And then the Don—I mean Arturo—begins to tell a long story about the Lovers of Teruel, and how true they were to each other. Arizona told me the first part of it, because he was talking in Spanish then; but pretty soon she got so interested she forgot all about me, and just sat there with her big brown eyes fixed on that idiot, and shook her head and sighed and cried. It seems that some boob in the Middle Ages went away and left his girl, and came back and found her married, so he died on the floor, and she died on his coffin. I got that much of it. You wouldn't think anybody could cry about something that happened so long ago, but these people can cry about anything.

"'That was love!' says Don Arturo. 'Love is like that! You must be willing to die for what you love! And we must be willing to live and die for Spain. We mustn't leave old Spain when she needs us.'

"'Isn't Don Arturo wonderful?' says Arizona to me, and I says, 'No, I think he's full of dill pickles,' and she gives

me a look you wouldn't hand to a horned toad—and then I let myself out and came back to the hotel, and they don't know I've gone, yet. They're up there laying down their lives on the altar of something, and crying about the Lovers of Teruel. But unless they change their minds before morning, we can run our excursion back to Los Angeles without any help from them. I'm going to bed. They give me malaria!"

"But wait, Freddie," cried his father. "We can't have those Fernandez people humbugged like that. If young Cervello wants to stay here, it's a nice place for him. But the other Don—he ought to—he ought to—we'd better go over now and talk with him! And Arizona—you said she was a sensible girl, with American ideas, Freddie. She——"

"She was," barked Freddie. "She was—until Arturo showed up. Now she's as looney as he is. When I saw that look in her eyes, when Arturo was talking about the Lovers of Teruel, I knew that it was all off with little Freddie. Right then and there, she forgot that she went to the high school in Tucson.—Well, the train can leave any time it gets ready. I'll be at the station!" And Freddie took his hat and bolted from the room.

"Don Quixote the Second!" said Major Poulson, looking at Glorietta.

She nodded slowly.

But, though the Fernandez family and Don Arturo did not leave Teruel with the Fenimores, they came down to the railway station next morning with a brave cavalcade of camp followers. Like all good travellers in Spain, the party arrived at the station a good hour before train time. The excellent Don Hilario had almost denuded the shops of flowers and sweetmeats and *recuerdos*—gifts for the Major,

for Freddie, for Glorietta, and the Colonel. A group of musicians, hastily drummed together, played lilting Aragonese airs at one end of the platform. Don Hilario wore his little silk American flag pinned to the lapel of his coat. Señora Fernandez hugged Freddie to her maternal bosom, and told him that he must always regard her as his mother. Arizona, a little shamefaced, held out her hand to him shyly and said that he must always come to stay with them whenever he was in Spain. But, even as she was speaking, her eyes drifted over toward Don Arturo, who stood some distance away, talking with Glorietta and the Major.

"I am very sorry," said Arturo. "I have given you so much trouble, and you have been so good to me. Major, I owe my life to you. And to you, Señorita Glorietta, I owe even more than my life, for—I do not know how, but it is so—you have given me a new sense of duty. I would like very much to see your country. It must be very great. Perhaps, some time—but when I said I would go with you, I was weak. It was because I did not know what to do. Perhaps I cannot do very much for my poor, beautiful Spain, but I must do what I can. And Don Hilario thinks the same. You will forgive me?"

"I think you are right, Don Arturo!" said Glorietta.

"And so do I," added the Major. "Good-bye, old chap, and good luck!"

CHAPTER XXVI

STILL, I think it was a bit thick, Glorietta, so far as Freddie is concerned. The poor boy is quite down. Do you suppose he was a good deal more in love with the Fernandez girl than anyone suspected?"

It was Major Poulson speaking, and Mrs. Poulson was tucked in beside him, on a deck chair on the transatlantic steamship, four days out of Cherbourg, for New York. A heavy mist had settled down over the Atlantic, but the sea was so calm that at times only the low purring of the dynamos and an almost imperceptible roll caused by the forward progress of the ship itself informed the passengers that they were not sitting in some hotel lobby. But there was a damp tang in the air outside.

Glorietta reflected before she replied. She was not in the mood to be flippant about love, even though evanescent. Yet she answered: "I don't really think we need worry too much about Freddie, Sidney. I've seen Freddie very much in love, four or five times. Freddie is a cork soul. You can sink him, but he comes up—usually grinning. Freddie is not ninety-nine per cent. pure, but, like the soap we see advertised so much, he floats. Besides, you and I know, and Freddie will realize, that the beautiful young lady had nothing much in her head."

"Freddie said she was clever."

"Yes, Freddie thought she was clever, because she seemed to like Freddie. We are all like that, aren't we? Clever people are people who appreciate us."

"Then you must think me the most sagacious beggar in the world!" said Poulson quickly.

"That was very well said, Sidney. Now, I'll tell *you* one. If you were really as wonderful and nice as I think you, this minute, you'd be obnoxious, and people would hate you for your superiority."

There was a long silence. Then the Major said: "I was thinking of Don Quixote. Were you?"

"Yes, Sidney." This very frankly, considering they were on their honeymoon, when it is not customary or conventional to ponder about other people. "I was."

"I was going to say, 'the poor devil,'" went on the Major. "But I'm not so sure that he needs our sympathy. Of course, if those rascals manage to get scot-free, when they're tried, they may make it uncomfortable for him. It depends upon how long their memories are, I suppose. Meantime, he is thrilled with a knightly desire to do something for Spain. Rather fine, isn't it? I haven't the remotest idea what he can do, nor how he can do it. No more has he. But, evidently, he has inspired Don Hilario with his enthusiasm. Do you suppose that he and Señorita Fernandez——"

"I do suppose so. I know so. That morning, when we were leaving on the train, did you notice how she looked at him? Poor Freddie! He noticed it, too! Sidney, Arizona couldn't resist the Lovers of Teruel. When he began to tell that yarn, the girl was lost! I mean, she was found."

"Silly rot, though," said Poulson, "that story of Marsilla and Isabel. They didn't act like intelligent creatures. Do you think so?"

"I think it must mean more to—to Arturo and Arizona than it means to us," Glorietta replied softly. "They see something finer in it than we can see. Perhaps we're too

practical, and we *are* practical. Especially you, my dear. Now, for example, Sidney, I know exactly what you are going to be like when we have a home of our own. You're going to bury your nose in the morning paper, at breakfast, and if I ask you a question, you're going to say: 'Eh? What's that? What's that, again?'"

"Oh, never, Glorietta! I'll never do it. I swear it!"

"Oh, yes, you will. And when my birthday comes, you'll forget all about it. And ten years from now, you won't remember whether we were married in June or November. And when I have moments when I want to be loved a little, and told how nice I am, you'll grab me and give me one of those lightning kisses and say, 'Well, what are we going to have for dinner?' If I want chocolates, I'll have to buy them for myself; or if I suggest that I have a sweet tooth, you'll say, 'All right, old girl. Step into the confectioner's and get some sweets.' And after this week, the only flowers you'll send me will be when I'm sick and hate the sight of them."

"Oh, really, now, Glorietta! Am I that bad?"

"Bad? I didn't say you were bad. You're good. But that's the way you are, Sidney, and, drat 'em, that's the way all such men are—those you can trust and have any respect for! I'm not scolding you. I'm simply looking forward to a safe, worth-while existence with the finest, most unromantic man in the world! And I wouldn't have it otherwise. But sometimes I'm going to the movies and just feast my eyes on the sheiks, and see the Valentinos take their sweethearts in their arms and crush them in a delirious embrace. Then I'll go and hear some matinée idol coo to his turtledove in the accents of passion, and it will make me wriggle with pleasure and feel all tingly in my toes. Then I'll think of Spain, and the guitar, and the cas-

tanets, and housetops in the moonlight. Then I'll make myself almost completely lunatic by thinking about those gloriously stupid lovers of Teruel, who die on each other's feet. And then—then——"

"My word, this sounds dangerous, Glorietta. You must restrain yourself. What will you do then?"

"Why, then—lean over here a minute, Sidney. There, that's right!" She put her lips to his and shut her eyes tightly. After a moment: "Then I'll thank heaven that I'm married to a man who isn't like that at all, but who means every word he says and says exactly what he means; a man who has never once done a mean or an unkind thing, and doesn't know how; a man I could come to at any moment and get sympathy and wise advice and understanding. That'll be much better, after all. You know the man I mean, Sidney."

"By George, I don't want to be vain, little girl, but it sounds like a description of me."

"It is you, dear."

That night, Sidney and Glorietta came out of their room to get a whiff of air. It was still misty. The ship glided along like a great living thing, tingling with suppressed eagerness. It was dark, and all was quiet. They walked to the end of the boat deck and stood at the rail, looking down at the porthole lights of the second-cabin smoking room, far below. Suddenly the Major grasped Glorietta's arm and whispered:

"Listen! That sounds like Freddie's voice. He's just below us, on the next deck."

"It is Freddie," replied Glorietta, after a pause. "Freddie has found balm for his injured soul. If I'm not mistaken,

the girl with him is the one who sits at the next table to ours, in the dining room."

"Well, we mustn't eavesdrop on the boy," said the Major, turning.

"Oh, we can eavesdrop just a wee bit, Sidney. We—ought to assure ourselves that Freddie is himself again, you know. What's that he is telling her?"

A low, earnest, almost dramatic voice floated upward from the deck below. It was Freddie Fenimore's. He was saying:

"Yes, this is a story I heard in Spain. It's the greatest love story in the world. It's about a young fellow named Marsilla and a beautiful girl named Isabel. . . ."

Mr. and Mrs. Poulson walked away and left the beautiful love story behind them. When they had reached the other end of the deck, Glorietta said:

"Freddie has learned something in Spain, dear. I don't know the young lady, but—she needs all her strength of mind this hour."

THE END